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THE EARLY CHURCH:

A HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE FIRST SIX CENTURIES.

BY THE LATE

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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

PROFESSOR DUFF prepared no part of his work for publication. The manuscript of these Lectures on the early period of Church History is written continuously. It contains numerous corrections and additions, with which I have dealt as carefully as possible. Most of the references have been verified. I am responsible for the division into chapters, the foot-notes in square brackets, and many of the translations in the text. Use has been made of several Lectures written for special occasions.

My best thanks are due to Principal CAIRNS, Professor JOHNSTONE, and Dr. ALEXANDER MAIR, for their kindness in revising the proof-sheets.

DAVID DUFF.

EDINBURGH, *October* 1891.

CONTENTS.

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	Times of Preparing—"Wild-growing" Religions and their Decay,	1
II.	The Jews of Palestine,	18
III.	The Jews of the Dispersion,	33
IV.	The Synagogue,	42
V.	Political History of the Jews about the Time of Christ's Coming,	46
VI.	The Beginning of the Christian Era,	55
VII.	Peter,	57
VIII.	John,	65
IX.	The other Disciples,	73
X.	Paul,	75
XI.	The Christians, the Jews, and the Roman Power — from Tiberius to Titus,	79
XII.	Gnosticism—The Ebionites, Cerinthus, and the Docetæ,	92
XIII.	The Christians and the Roman Power—Domitian and Nerva,	102
XIV.	The Apostolic Fathers—Clemens Romanus,	104
XV.	The Christians and the Roman Power—The Times of Trajan —Pliny's Letter—Ignatius,	113
XVI.	The Christians, the Jews, and the Roman Power — From Hadrian to Marcus Aurelius,	133
XVII.	The Apologists—Justin Martyr,	157
XVIII.	The Observance of Easter Controversy,	171
XIX.	Gnosticism—Basilides, Valentinus, Ophites, Sethites, Cainites, Marcion,	179
XX.	Irenæus,	191
XXI.	Montanism,	200
XXII.	The Christians and the Roman Power — Commodus and Severus,	211
XXIII.	The Christians and the Roman Power—From Caracalla to Philip,	221
XXIV.	The Christians and the Roman Power — Decius, Gallus, Valerian, Gallienus, Claudius, Aurelian,	229
XXV.	The Christians and the Roman Power—Diocletian,	235
XXVI.	Tertullian,	244

CHAP.		PAGE
XXVII.	Cyprian,	254
XXVIII.	Clement of Alexandria,	274
XXIX.	Origen,	282
XXX.	The Christians and the Roman Power — Constantine and Maxentius,	304
XXXI.	The Christians and the Roman Power — Constantine and Licinius,	323
XXXII.	The Donatist Controversy,	336
XXXIII.	The Arian Controversy—Doctrine of the Trinity before the Nicene Council,	348
XXXIV.	The Arian Controversy—Arius—The Council of Nicæa,	363
XXXV.	The Arian Controversy after the Council of Nicæa,	383
XXXVI.	Some Notes on Hilary,	394
XXXVII.	Constantine and his Sons and the Church,	395
XXXVIII.	Julian,	407
XXXIX.	The Christians in the Times of Jovian, Valentinian, and Gratian,	427
XL.	Theodosius,	432
XLI.	Arcadius and Honorius,	443
XLII.	Justinian,	449
XLIII.	Ambrose,	457
XLIV.	Doctrine of the Holy Spirit,	466
XLV.	The Origenistic Controversy—The Controversy in Palestine,	476
XLVI.	Some Notes on Jerome,	481
XLVII.	The Origenistic Controversy—The Controversy in Egypt and at Constantinople,	483
XLVIII.	Chrysostom,	496
XLIX.	The Origenistic Controversy—Close of the Controversy—Points Involved in the Discussion,	500
L.	Doctrine of the Person of Christ before the time of Nestorius,	504
LI.	Doctrine of the Person of Christ—Nestorius and his Heresy,	510
LII.	Doctrine of the Person of Christ—The Eutychian Heresy,	533
LIII.	Doctrine of the Person of Christ—The Monophysite Heresy,	542
LIV.	Doctrine of the Person of Christ—The Monothelitic Heresy,	554
LV.	The Pelagian and the Semi-Pelagian Controversy,	561
LVI.	Augustine,	592
LVII.	Development of the Doctrine of Papal Supremacy,	605
	INDEX,	617

ERRATA.

On page 19, in second last line, *delete* "from."

On page 380, *for* "Meletus" *read* "Meletius."

THE EARLY CHURCH.

CHAPTER I.

TIMES OF PREPARING—"WILD-GROWING" RELIGIONS AND THEIR DECAY.

It is truly said by an ecclesiastical historian that Providence, though it may not move at a uniform pace, is not wont to advance by leaps. Extraordinary revolutions, which bring to light much that was previously unknown and unconceived, may be called a new creation; and of all the revolutions which have taken place in the history of the world, Christianity is certainly best entitled to the name. But this new creation does not come forth out of an absolute chaos. We learn from the New Testament itself that it was in the "fulness of the times" that Christ appeared; and while that phrase may be held as referring chiefly to the completeness of the special and supernatural preparation which had been made in the midst of the people of Israel, no one will be disposed to deny that it comprehends also the completion of a process which took place over a vastly wider field, though some may affirm that, as respects the religious history of the Gentiles, the fulness of the times was come morally, because a full demonstration was now afforded of the utter worthlessness and wickedness of paganism. But, at all events, preparation had been made; and long, dark furrows, stretching over the great field of the world, had been opened up for the reception of the heavenly seed. Christianity was not a product of the past: it was not a product of earth. But, in the past, mountains had been levelled and valleys filled up, and there had been types and forerunners and aspirations and promises among those who could do no more than feel after God,

as well, though not in the same degree, or so directly from the highest source, as among those to whom God had revealed Himself by the prophets.

Let us first look shortly at those nations whose religion, as it is sometimes expressed, "grew wild"—those who were not favoured with supernatural communications such as were vouchsafed to the Jews. Now there are different ways of regarding paganism—different points of view from which it is considered in tracing the history of religious development. The first refuses to recognise the distinction between a "wild-growing" religion and one which has enjoyed the special husbandry of the great God Himself: it makes no distinction between natural religion and revealed. According to this mode of apprehending it, heathenism is not only a perfectly natural condition but a necessary stage in the development of the human spirit—a transitional state which leads to Christianity as a perfectly natural result, and, in particular, to those principles of Christianity which are conceived to be its kernel.

A second mode of apprehension is that which will perceive nothing but what is false in the so-called religious knowledge of the heathen, and nothing but what is devilish in their life. It is sometimes affirmed that most Protestant creeds compel their adherents to take this view, but the language used concerning human depravity, while clearly denoting that all actions performed by men in their natural condition, and uninfluenced by the highest motives, are essentially defective, and therefore sinful, must be interpreted in accordance with the historical evidence of a "relative virtue" among pagans. Even those who feel scruples, not unreasonable, as to the use of the word "virtue," cannot avoid such phrases as the "temperance of a Zeno," the "continence of a Scipio," or the "faith of a Regulus."

According to a third view, a partial knowledge of the truth may be discerned in or under the false systems of the heathen world. There are traces to be found of the truth of God which has been changed into a lie. This seems to be implied even in the hideous picture which Paul draws in the Epistle to the Romans of heathen error and uncleanness, but still more plainly in the address which he delivered on Mars Hill.

Many—perhaps the majority—of those who take this view of heathenism hold, further, that the religious history of the world naturally took a downward course, as indeed the world has witnessed of itself by the widespread tradition of an earlier, a peaceful, and blissful age, which had been long ago lost. This opinion is strongly expressed by A. W. Schlegel in language which Dean Milman quotes approvingly: "The more I investigate the ancient history of the world, the more I am convinced that the civilised nations set out from a purer worship of the Supreme Being; that the magic power of nature over the imagination of the successive human races first, at a later period, produced polytheism, and, finally, altogether obscured the more spiritual religious notions in the popular belief; while the wise alone preserved within the sanctuary the primeval secret. Hence, mythology appears to me the last developed and most changeable part of the old religion. The divergence of the various mythologies, therefore, proves nothing against the descent of the religions from a common source. The mythologies might be locally formed, according to the circumstances of climate or soil; it is impossible to mistake this with regard to the Egyptian myths." [1] It is to be observed that in this passage the downward tendency, with its extravagant results, is asserted only of the "popular" religion, and that the possibility of the "wise," as the writer calls them, holding a purer creed is by no means denied.

If we take, as some have taken, the essence of religion to be the feeling of dependence, it is easy to understand how those who had lost the knowledge of the true God should find objects of worship in nature and its powers, and how the variety which meets us should be determined in great measure by the difference of climate, circumstances, and habits of life. The phenomena of the atmosphere, for example, could not have the same effect on religious conceptions in Egypt as among the Greeks or other nations whose sky was more variable. It was the Nile that awakened the feeling of dependence in the land of the Pharaohs, and we need not wonder that the worship of that

[1] [*Hist. of Christianity from the Birth of Christ to the Abolition of Paganism in the Roman Empire.* Bk. i. ch. i. p. 13, note.]

country turned mainly about the river—Osiris, sought and found, then lost and mourned, by the longing Isis, the thirsty land.[1] It can hardly be questioned, however, that Zabaism, the worship of the heavenly bodies, originated, and prevailed chiefly, among oriental shepherd tribes, although it was by no means confined to them, but extended also to agricultural races. The form of dualism connected with this nature worship—light and darkness, Ormuzd and Ahriman, good and evil in perpetual conflict—may afterwards require particular notice.[2] But other religious systems have much in common with Zabaism. The heavenly bodies have a place in them. And here again the influence of climate may be discerned. How different the sun-god of the Greeks from the sun-god Moloch, which represented the scorching, killing heat of a Syrian summer, and was honoured with the sacrifices of children, whom, according to the Jewish tradition, parents put into his burning brazen arms!

It has been remarked that the East, generally speaking, was tired of its gods when Alexander conquered it, and that the worship of the Olympian divinities spread over Asia Minor without encountering any formidable resistance except at the borders of that land where a purer faith had been established by special divine revelations and institutions. What is most noteworthy with regard to the diffusion of Greek ideas and rights over the greater part of the region subdued by the Macedonian is, that there was as little religious zeal on the one side as on the other—on the side of the victors as on the side of the vanquished. Probably there was even less on the side of the former than on the side of the latter, for already there was deeply felt (and among multitudes who could not well give an account of the origin of their scepticism) the influence of ideas hostile to the old simple faith in the divinities with which the Greek imagination had peopled all nature. But the propagation of a religion which was now suffering from internal weakness, and was rapidly declining on its native soil, was an affair of national honour, was not undesirable in the interests of

[1] Osiris, however, is not universally identified with the Nile, some regarding him as god of the sun.

[2] [The subject is not resumed.]

humanity, and certainly must have seemed to be most desirable in the interests of the new dignities which were created in the room of those which had been overthrown.

Hellenic art, it is frequently said, created its gods in the Hellenic image. As it is expressed by Gieseler, "The Grecian gods were ideal Greeks, thinking and living as Greeks;"[1] or, as it is expressed by Hase, "The Grecian world of divinity was an ideal copy of Grecian popular life, formed by art and for art;"[2] and this copy, reflecting and exaggerating the immorality which prevailed, "was a mirror in which the light-minded people beheld themselves and justified themselves." There is undeniable truth in this view; but, though the Greek divinities, in contrast with oriental rigidity, were elevated to moving individual forms with characteristic differences, and were conceived of as entering into manifold relations and alliances and conflicts, and displaying such virtues and excellences, and very often such weaknesses and vices, as are common among men, it is equally undeniable that the religion of the Greek was not mere man-worship, and that the worship of surrounding nature underlies the anthropomorphism with which we are familiar through the poetry of Homer, and which is certainly preferable to the unimaginative, stiff and monotonous, often monstrous and cruel, systems of idolatry which, as we have seen, it displaced to some extent over wide regions of Asia Minor. The divinities whose names come most readily to our lips — Zeus, Here, Poseidon, Apollo — originated as plainly as Osiris and Baal and Oromasdes[3] in the feeling of dependence on nature and its powers. It is no more necessary to prove this than to prove that the dryads and oreads were divinities of the groves and of the mountains. Deified men, and deified attributes also, are embraced in the mythology of Greece; but, though man is included, it is the picture of a vast and varied nature-worship, drawn by a people whose fancy was fruitful, whose eye and ear were ever open, and whose great immorality, reflected from Olympus, was often restrained by the sense and love of beauty, even as the rude manslaughtering Mars could be tamed by the

[1] [*Kirchengesch.* Einleit. i. § 10.] [2] [*Kirchengesch.* 11te Auflage, S. 17.]
[3] [The Greek form of Ormuzd.]

goddess whom they worshipped in the fairest of their temples.[1]

Although some divinities were worshipped with impure and debasing rites,—and such consecration of vice cannot be too deeply deplored,—it is going too far to say that the Greek religion was wholly immoral in its character and tendency, and that it exercised only a corrupting and pernicious influence. It must be admitted, however, that it contrasts in this respect very unfavourably with the religion of the ancient Romans, whose gods, though many of them may have originally represented objects or powers of external nature, were conceived of and adored more directly in their relation to human life, public or domestic. Thus Juno is the divine prototype of woman, the guardian of marriage, patroness of wives and mothers; while Jupiter, the great sovereign of heaven, is worshipped above all as the invisible head and protector of the Roman State. To such divinities, in accordance with the genius of the people, which was directed less to external nature than to the forces and influences that govern human life, there are added others which are simply abstractions, such as Fides and Concordia and Victoria. For every variety of relation and of duty, and for every period of life, there are special deities, whose favour is to be invoked or whose wrath is to be averted. There are deities who teach the child to cry, to walk, to speak, and to sing. Throughout the entire system the practical understanding manifests itself. It is a form of nature-worship widely different from that of the Greek; and that its moral influences were more healthful is not disputed. "The great historian Polybius," says Neander,[2] "has given us a picture of Roman life, such as it was a century and a half before Christ, while it yet retained its ancient simplicity. Judging by those maxims of the understanding, which, as a statesman, he was in the habit of applying to the affairs of the world, he believed that that very trait which had been most commonly objected to in the Roman character,—an excessive superstition wrought into their whole public and private life,—was, in truth, the firmest pillar of the Roman State. Contemplating religion in this outward way, he saw in it only a means, which the wisdom

[1] Pallas Athene.

[2] [*Church History*, vol. i. p. 8, Torrey's trans.]

of lawgivers employed, for training and leading the multitude. 'If it were possible,' he remarked, 'to form a State of wise men, such a procedure would perhaps be found unnecessary. But, as a counterpoise to the power which unruly passions and desires exercise over the excitable multitude, there is need of such contrivances to hold them in check by their fear of the invisible, and by such like tales of horror.'" This passage has been quoted as showing the moral power of the Roman religion at the time when, according to Neander, Roman life retained its ancient simplicity. That its power was still felt deeply at that period is unquestionable, but it appears from the passage itself that at that very period—a century and a half before Christ—there were those who sought to undermine the old faith which had proved so salutary, and whom Polybius thought he had good reason to censure. But censure of the assailants of a religion, it is hardly needful to say, when accompanied with a contemptuous avowal of personal unbelief, is not the most likely means of upholding it when it is threatened with destruction. And at that very period great historical events, vastly more than the attacks of which Polybius complained, were hastening on the consummation. The fall of Corinth in the year 146 B.C., the year in which Carthage was destroyed, was a most important epoch in the religious, as well as in the civil, history of the world. The tendency strongly felt by the Roman at this period, though not peculiar to him, to find his own gods again in those of the nations he subdued, and, when he had none of his own that in any way corresponded, to adopt the new, brought him, as respects religion also, into subjection to the superior mind of captive Greece. The stories, many of them grossly human, that were told of the gods of Olympus, were transferred to Jupiter, Juno, Mars, and the other Latin divinities. The doubts of Greece were likewise transferred to the land of the conqueror, the very multiplication and confusion of gods and rites and legends being in the highest degree provocative of the destructive criticism which Polybius so earnestly deprecated. In gaining the empire of the world, Rome lost—if you will call it a loss—her old religion so far as it was strictly national.

But in the spiritual world, it has been said, "when the

old falls, the new is already present." The old systems of the civilised world were being subverted because certain ideas, as enlightenment advanced, were diffused, which made them appear, as they had been popularly understood in the past, scarcely less irrational than the fetichism of the most savage barbarians. It has already been noticed that the process of dissolution had begun long before the destruction of Corinth and the subjugation of Greece — nay, before Alexander carried his victorious arms into Asia. One might go still further back; but, to refer to the time of him whose teaching made the greatest epoch in the history of philosophy; there is much in the character of the opposition he provoked that shows that the ancient system did not hold the popular mind with so firm a grasp as formerly. Men who were far from denying or underrating the genius of Aristophanes have remarked that the obscene language and the blaspheming orthodoxy of the great comedian furnish more conclusive evidence of widespread corruption and impiety than all the shafts which he hurls against both. But, on the other hand, the influence of philosophy, or, if you will, the progress of enlightenment, appears in a more pleasing way in the great tragedians, who so frequently introduce the "gods many" of their country as representatives of the "one" which is vaguely designated the Divine, and as subject to a higher law—not capricious and conflicting powers, as in the somewhat anarchical Olympus of old times, which had been consecrated by the immortal verse of Homer.

As for Socrates himself, "the greatest forerunner of Christ in the heathen world," as he has often been called,—the lover of wisdom whom Aristophanes calumniated and ridiculed, and whom the Forty condemned to the cup of poison,—it is not my purpose to give an account of his life and teaching. I would simply remind you of that to which, as it is expressed by Baur, this philosopher owes his epoch-making significance—the famous γνῶθι σεαυτόν—his demand that the spirit should turn from the outer to the inner world—that man should become acquainted with himself in the depth of his own self-consciousness, in order to learn in what relation he stands to God and into what relation to Him he ought to come. This demand bears a certain correspondence with the

first, made by the Christian religion—*μετανοεῖτε*—and it is clear that it was fitted to awaken the idea and desire of a redemption. It did so; and, though the redemption conceived of by the followers of Socrates, and in particular by his greatest disciple Plato, was not, as it could not be expected to be, quite the same as that which was wrought by Christ, yet the conception and the desire, as well as the demand which had excited both, offered points of contact for the new religion that was to supersede the mythologies of Greece and Rome. When a man truly longs for deliverance from the blind power of nature, and at the same time for a clearer revelation of heavenly truth, he is "not far from the kingdom of God." The longing for both is expressed by Plato. And how elevated and far-reaching is that philosophy which would have itself regarded as *μελέτη θανάτου*—a "preparation for death," *i.e.* for immortal life! The sort of immortality which it offered, however, is sometimes described in a way that could not be generally attractive, and this leads us to notice one vital point which shows the immense superiority of Christianity. Plato's philosophy was not designed or expected to exercise any general influence of a direct kind. The multitude for him was as good as non-existent. He addresses himself to a chosen few, and not to the race. Neander indeed says: "Compared with the principle of ethical *self*-sufficiency, with that elevation of the feeling of self peculiar to the ancient world, and which appears to have reached its highest point in Stoicism—the Platonic system was distinguished by a tendency towards that which is most directly opposed to that principle, the Christian idea, viz., of humility. The word *ταπεινός*, which, according to the general sentiment of the ancient world, was employed, for the most part, in a bad sense, as indicating a slavish self-debasement, is to be met with in Plato and the Platonists as the designation of a pious, virtuous temper;" it is "opposed to the impious spirit of self-exaltation."[1] Notwithstanding this statement, the oft-repeated saying remains true, that the ancients had no word in their language exactly corresponding with the grace of humility in the Christian sense. For in this sense humility has essentially a twofold

[1] [*Church History*, vol. i. p. 26, with note.]

aspect—an aspect manward as well as Godward. It is not only opposed to the impious spirit of self-exaltation,—the spirit which exalts itself against the divinity and the order of the universe,—but it includes the disposition to honour all men and to condescend to men of low estate. Surrounded by the temples and statues of the gods, and four centuries before Paul delivered that discourse of which the inscription on the Athenian altar to "An Unknown God" was the starting-point, Plato could write that well-known sentence in which he confesses the insufficiency, for the race, of the philosophy which he had cultivated with genius so rare and admirable, and which had accelerated the destruction of the popular religion: "It is difficult to discover the Divinity, and when He is discovered, it is impossible to make him known to all." This "aristocratic philosophy," as it has been called, which had begun by descending into man himself, had gone deeper still, or had found within something of the Divine, which led it upward to the Absolute and Eternal—the free and wise and righteous spirit, to which the universe stood in some such relation as the human body to the human soul. There was here a reduction of the hereditary and official polytheism to that unity from which, according to some, it had originally sprung; and though Plato addressed the chosen few, his voice was heard by the world, some of the great thoughts which he expounded spreading abroad and producing a powerful and inevitable effect on those who were incapable of fully comprehending and appreciating him. It is unjust to him to say that his influence was merely negative and destructive; but for the last revelation of Divine truth, pure and authoritative in doctrine and morals, constraining in motive, addressed and adapted to the race, we must look not to Plato,—he himself is far from pretending to give it,—but to Him in whom alone Plato's noblest pictures of moral beauty have been fully realised, and who was entirely free from the grave errors and imperfections with which Plato has been reproached—the Son of Man, who came down from heaven, and who, being ταπεινὸς τῇ καρδίᾳ, preached the gospel to the poor. Pressensé applies to Plato's philosophy a quotation from his own symposium: "It desires what is supremely beautiful without possessing what it pursues."

Of all the philosophers of antiquity who have influenced the development of Christian theology none can be compared with Plato, except Aristotle, the philosopher of the "intellect," who was Plato's disciple for twenty years. But, whatever merits his system and method may possess in other points of view, they have not, as respects the preparation for Christianity, the importance of his master's; and while they undoubtedly have their part in creating the void which the new religion came to fill, they are not so fitted to awaken religious aspiration, and do not offer the same points of contact for the true faith.

Before adverting to other systems, let us go back for a moment to the teaching of Socrates, and notice a consequence of his fundamental principle that a man should go inward and come to the consciousness of himself as a moral subject. This subjectivity was subversive of the ancient principle which had long passed unquestioned, and which found some such expression as this: "The whole is before the part, the State before the individual: the individual lives in the State and for it." To this principle a fatal blow was struck by the demand to seek the grounds of thinking and acting in one's own spirit. If this be the true starting-point, then the end which a man has to pursue is not the prosperity of the State, but a virtuous life. It is not Athens, but the individual moral subject himself that becomes the measure of good. Accordingly, in the systems that were developed by the immediate disciples of Socrates, widely diverging as these systems were, this subjectivity continues to assert itself. It is indeed not uncommon to speak of Plato as an exception, and to represent him as having sacrificed the individual to the commonwealth; but it was certainly not to any actually existing State that he would have subordinated the individual, but to one constituted and governed in accordance with everlasting ideas and principles which he believed could be educed from within. But still more powerfully did the subjectivity to which, it may be, Plato did not concede its full rights, assert itself when the old free States, to which the citizens had been wont to devote themselves so cheerfully and often so heroically, had been subjugated, first by the arms of Macedonia, and then by the arms of Rome. The

world-monarchy of the Romans was a vast aggregate, in which, occupation with public affairs being for the most part impossible and, where possible, often distasteful, the individual all the more naturally turned in upon himself and sought to discover the laws and principles that were to regulate him in performing his life's task as a human being. This we see illustrated in Stoicism and Epicureanism, which were founded about three centuries before Christ, the one by Zenò of Citium, the other by Epicurus of Gargettus, near Athens, and which prevailed so widely throughout the Roman Empire when Christianity was introduced into the world. Both, it has been said, seek the same end,—tranquillity, peace, freedom of mind,—dealing not so much with great metaphysical problems as with rules of life which are fitted to promote the well-being of the individual. The one will have a strong Ich, by which evil is endured without pain or disgust; the other will have a safe Ich, by which evil is avoided. The Stoic, whose system had great attractions for noble minds, especially among the Romans, exhibited in full length his ideal of the wise man, which possessed all possible perfections except, it has often been remarked, that of reality. It is not easy to see, however, how this is any disparagement of that philosophy; and it should be acknowledged that it is much to have vigorously grasped and held fast, in an age of decay and corruption, the idea that man has a moral task; to have presented that idea in its universality, as rising above all national elements and distinctions; and, at the same time, to have taught that the right performance of the task gives to life its value—a value undimmed and undiminished, rather rendered greater and more conspicuous, by reproach and calamity and death. That such teaching was merely hollow rhetoric and was utterly without influence it is unjust to say; but comparatively unfruitful it was and could not but be, since it lacks not only the higher motives which Christianity supplies but some of its higher principles. The Stoic had nothing of the "humility" (ταπεινοφροσύνη) which, at least in one of its aspects, as we have seen, belonged to Platonism; and very different is the pantheistic subjection of himself under an iron necessity, from the meek submission of a soul that does not rest in the consciousness of its own worth, but trusts in the fatherly love of

the only wise God, who alone can make wise unto salvation. Of such a God the Stoic had no conception. For him all the gods of his country were but names and emblems for different manifestations of the universal life and soul, from which all flows and which receives all into itself again.

Epicureanism is usually viewed as purely antagonistic to Christianity, and indeed to all religion; for although the existence of gods was not denied, both creation and providence were; and we cannot therefore wonder that the system should usually be called atheistic. This philosophy, then, had its part too in creating the void which Christianity came to fill. In making pleasure the end of life, the founder had indeed recognised virtue as an indispensable means: "Clamat Epicurus non posse jucunde vivi nisi sapienter, honeste justeque vivatur."[1] But such a system rapidly and inevitably degenerated. Socrates and Plato had gone down to man's soul that they might go deeper still to the Divine and eternal; the Epicurean stopped with himself as the fixed immovable point round which the universe revolves, having interest for him only as it ministers to or threatens to disturb his happiness.

But there were some who despaired of attaining any certain knowledge in religion or morals, putting the question, "What is truth?" as one which had never been answered, and to which no answer was to be expected. It is needless to say that this scepticism, represented chiefly by Arkesilaus (318–241 B.C.) and Carneades (214–130 B.C.), increased the desolation and darkness caused by the decline of the popular religions.

There were some, however, who, while they did not attach themselves to Epicureanism or to Stoicism—the egoism of self-indulgence and the egoism of self-righteousness, as they have been respectively called—or to any other system, could not prevail upon themselves to abandon all philosophising, but gathered from various sources such ideas as commended themselves to them, particularly those which seemed most likely to blossom and fructify in the moral region. This eclecticism is indeed the daughter of scepticism, since it presupposes not only dissatisfaction with existing systems but

[1] Cicero, *De Finibus* [Lib. i. c. 18.: "Epicurus declares that one cannot live pleasantly unless one live wisely, honourably, and justly."]

despair of finding a new one, rounded and complete, that could be substituted for the old. The probabilism of the eclectic, however, leaned to the opposite side from that of the sceptic —to that of certainty, and not to that of doubt or denial. The chief representatives of this eclectic direction, which appears to have been the most prevalent mode of thinking among cultivated men when Christianity was introduced into the world, and for a considerable time afterwards, teach so much that is akin to Christianity that readers have often felt as if they were standing not merely on the territory of popular philosophy and natural theology but on that of revealed religion. With regard to Seneca, in particular, who is sometimes ranked with the Eclectics, though now frequently with the Stoics, some have found it necessary to resort to the hypothesis that he was acquainted with the truths of Christianity as proclaimed in his immediate neighbourhood, and some have even found the source of his teaching in the fable that he carried on a correspondence with the Apostle Paul. The resemblance is in many points close, but not so close or of such a nature as to demand this explanation, and the vast difference between Paul and Seneca on great fundamental questions would militate against it, and dispose us to reject it, even if there were, as there is not, some show of historical evidence in its favour. It has been well said [1] of Seneca (the teacher of Nero and the brother of Gallio), that while he has little of the harshness of Stoicism; while he has a conception of a merciful God who educates men through suffering; while he speaks of a blessed communion and friendship between the Divinity and man, which is to be valued more highly than all worldly prosperity, yet the grave doubts which have been cast upon his own moral character, and especially the avarice which has been laid to his charge with too good reason, and which was so sorely at variance with the lofty language in which he inculcates contempt of the world, furnish one among the many illustrations of the truth that the noblest moral teaching cannot redeem and renew, cannot produce or take the place of that great inward revelation which Christianity terms a new birth.

There are two other representatives of Eclecticism who

[1] By Hagenbach [*Kirchengesch.*, i. 16].

are better known than Seneca, and at the same time exhibit more truly than he the eclectic spirit. These are Cicero and Plutarch. For an account of the views of the latter, and particularly of his religious views, we may refer to Neander, who gives ample information, confirmed by copious and interesting quotations from his writings. I shall quote one passage, interesting as showing that in the case of this philosopher at least, when the old was falling the new was present —not certainly the Christian religion itself, but some principle or principles of a kindred nature, which might well prove preparatory to its reception. "It was the purpose," says Neander, "of this apologetic and reforming philosophy of religion, to counteract infidelity as well as superstition, by setting forth the ideal matter contained in the old religions. From this position, and with this object in view, Plutarch, in his hortatory discourse to a priestess of Isis, thus remarks: 'As it is not the long beard and mantle that make the philosopher, so is it neither a linen robe nor a shaven head that make the priest of Isis. But the true priest of Isis is he who first of all receives from the laws the rites and customs pertaining to the gods, and then examines into their grounds, and philosophises on the truth they contain.' With some profoundness of meaning Plutarch compares the old myths—considered as representations of the ideas which have resulted from a refraction of the Divine light by some foreign substance, a reappearance of it after having been broken by the intervention of some heterogeneous medium—to the rainbow as a refraction of the sun's light. We find here the first beginnings of an attempt to reconcile the natural and supernatural in religion; to adjust the position of the rationalist with that of the supernaturalist, the scientific interest with the religious; tendencies and ideas which, advancing beyond the position maintained by the old religions of nature, stepped forward to meet the Theism of revelation. And it was by such means alone that a reconciliation could be effectually brought about, and a true understanding of the religious development of humanity become possible." [1]

Like Cicero, the philosopher of Chæronea had a strong

[1] Plutarch by no means denied the supernatural. In the above passage he would rather seem to explain it away.

faith in immortality, and, though he cannot be supposed to have been acquainted with the writings of Paul, he compares life with a dream and death with an awaking, and consoles those who are in the midst of life's struggles by reminding them that the combatants receive not the crown while they fight but when the battle is over and the victory won. No pagan writer of antiquity shows a more truly religious spirit. It is not astonishing, however, that among the cultivated there were those who could not find a body of truth under the mythological dress, a kernel within the shell. To them the form was without contents. They might break their teeth on the shell, but they could extract nothing that would satisfy their souls. If, then, there were some who, like Plutarch, showed a peculiar preparedness for Christianity, there were others among eminent thinkers, like the elder Pliny, in whom we see the truth that the "fulness of the times" was come illustrated on a different side, and who prove the vastness of the gap which divine revelation was given to fill. "All religion," says Pliny, "is the offspring of necessity, weakness, and fear. What God is—if in truth He be any Being distinct from the world—it is beyond the compass of man's understanding to know. But it is a foolish delusion, springing from human weakness and pride, to imagine that such an infinite Spirit would concern Himself with the petty affairs of men. The vanity of man, and his insatiable longing for existence, have led him also to dream of a life after death. A being full of contradictions, he is the most wretched of creatures, since no other has wants transcending the bounds of his nature. Man's nature is a lie, uniting the greatest poverty with the greatest pride. Among such great evils the greatest good that God has bestowed upon man is the power of taking his own life."

It is evident that the progress of thought and civilisation beyond the primeval simplicity which had rendered a literal belief in the mythological systems possible, would be felt, so far as it influenced the masses of society, chiefly on its negative and destructive side. For a long period, indeed, the mixed mythology which had spread in the empire was of such a nature that, even when sincerely accepted, it was not calculated to act deeply and favourably on life and morals, and, in

some respects, could not but act on them most disastrously. But the testimony of contemporary writers—not merely of the satirist but of the historian and moralist—exhibits the wickedness and licentiousness of the age of Augustus in colours like those used by the Apostle himself in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. Before the time of Augustus, the world-conquering Rome, drunk with the blood of nations and contaminated by foreign vices, had begun to prey on its own bowels, and had become sadly familiar with civil war, assassination, and poisoning. And now, at the birth of Christ, when the old religion, though its ceremonies might be maintained in observance, had become an insufficient engine of policy; when, according to the language of Cicero so often quoted, two augurs could not meet without a smile playing on their lips; and when, according to the same authority, no one believed any longer in fables of Tartarus and in the joys of Elysium, the empire itself was threatened with the fate of its religion. The seeds of destruction were inherent in it. A multitude of miserable slaves, unbounded luxury, and the growing power of the soldiers, who could no longer turn their arms abroad—these were among the sources of peril now menacing the world-monarchy that had risen by the sword; and though Christianity, of course, was in no wise responsible for them, they were destined to affect powerfully its future history. Meanwhile she stepped into the wilderness of wickedness, when, according to Seneca, men could endure neither their guilt nor its remedy, but when the hope which had long been cherished in Judæa seemed to grow up and blossom like a solitary flower in the midst of barrenness and desolation.

Meanwhile — and in this we cannot but recognise the special providence of God—the unity of the known and civilised world and its tranquillity were maintained and secured by the moderation and wisdom of Augustus, whose successors, partly from the inactivity of their nature, were disposed to follow his policy.

CHAPTER II.

THE JEWS OF PALESTINE.

Among the Jews we see religion holding a place which strikingly contrasts with that assigned to it among the Romans. In Judæa the religious interest was not subordinate to the civil and secular, as in Rome, but the civil and secular interest was subordinate to the religious. But we need not go so far as the capital of the world to find an illustration of the contrast which the peculiar people offered to all other nations. On the coast in the immediate neighbourhood men were occupied with wool and glass and purple, and in the north also the inhabitants were more concerned about the commercial advantages that could be derived from the new Roman unity and organisation than about such questions as agitated the descendants of those to whom God had spoken by the prophets. The burning questions on the sacred soil did not turn on matters of external policy, or commerce, or political economy, but on matters of religion, though behind them secular interests, and civil, might also be cherished,—and sometimes, especially in the case of the Sadducees, these were not concealed,—and though, as was inevitable, the conflicts which arose on the religious territory exerted a powerful influence on the course of the nation's outward history.

The two principal parties, as you are aware, were the Pharisees and Sadducees. It is common to speak of them as sects, but more than one writer in recent times has noticed that the application of the term "sect" to them, as the word is now generally understood, is incorrect, since they did not separate themselves, and had no thought of separating themselves, from the religious communion of their nation, but considered themselves on both sides to be its truest members and representatives. Equally incorrect is it to speak of the Pharisees as the conservative party in such a sense of the

expression as is current among us; and it is scarcely less objectionable to speak of the Sadducees as the rationalistic party, for, generally speaking, they were far from questioning the Divine authority or the Divine origin of the books which they did receive, viz., the books of Moses, and sometimes adhered more rigidly to the strict interpretation where the Pharisees' disposition to exercise judgment mildly delivered them for the time from the bondage of the letter—as, for instance, in the passage "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," where the former insisted on the strict fulfilment of the words, while the latter thought that pecuniary indemnification might be accepted in atonement for the offence.

Neither party can, in the worst sense, be called "rationalistic," though the Pharisees may with some propriety be termed the "orthodox," since, with all their exaggerations and aberrations, they held the national religion in its actual development, and, however erroneous their conceptions of the Messiah, cherished the hope of His advent. If, however, either party is to be called conservative, it is not they, but the Sadducees, who have been with good reason characterised as a "priestly aristocracy." This they certainly were when the apostles began to proclaim their crucified and risen Lord.[1] Among the ancestors of the men who formed this conservative party were those of whom they had little reason to be proud, and who had proved apostates and traitors; but still, though not undisputed or uninterrupted, their influence and power were great in the Temple, as, on the other hand, the party of the Pharisees, with whom they stood in direct antagonism, ruled the synagogue, and ruled through the Synagogue.

The derivation of the name Sadducee from the common word meaning "righteous" is now abandoned by many, though it had this to recommend it, that, however far their personal character might be from corresponding with it, it was at least indicative of their strict adherence to the letter of the Law. By many they are believed to have been called from the proper name Zadok, whether the ancestor of the ancient and famous and Levitical family mentioned in Ezekiel xl. 46 and in other passages, or from a Zadok who flourished about two centuries and a half before Christ, and who was a

[1] Acts iv. 1; v. 17.

pupil of Antigonus Socho, who is said to have taught that virtue ought to be cultivated without respect to any recompense of reward, and to have denied the doctrine of retribution in a future life.[1] This doctrine, we know, was denied by the whole party, whether they derived their name from the Zadok of the third century, or, as seems to many more probable, from the more ancient Zadok spoken of by the prophet. It does not appear to be established that they expressly and openly rejected all the books of the Hebrew canon except the Pentateuch, but, if they accepted the others, they must have understood them as harmonising, or explained them so as to make them harmonise, with the explicit teaching of the latter. From the books of Moses, which they did revere, and not from later writings, which to us seem to contain plainer proofs, Jesus draws His answer to their perplexing question—as they supposed it to be—concerning the resurrection of the dead: "Whose wife shall she be of the seven?" The reply was profitable for correction as well as for instruction, charging the Sadducees with want of spiritual understanding in failing to penetrate beneath the surface of the books of which they recognised the Divine authority, and so failing to discover the germ of doctrines which were afterwards to be more fully disclosed: "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures or the power of God." The Sadducees, however, were not uniformly true to the principle of accepting the letter, and nothing but the letter, of Scripture. It is certain that they denied the existence of angels as well as the doctrine of the resurrection. The angelic appearances, accordingly, recorded in the Pentateuch they must have interpreted, not, as the Pharisees and the Jews generally did, literally, but as transient manifestations of God Himself, by which, without employing the agency of any intermediate being, He delivered His communications to men.

[1] [According to the legend in the *Aboth de-Rabbi Nathan*, Antigonus, following Simon the Just, said that men ought to serve God "without regard to recompense," that their "reward may be double in the future." Later disciples maintained that, as it was said by the fathers that we must labour without thought of recompense, these fathers could not have believed in a future life and a resurrection of the dead. It was thus that these doctrines came to be denied. Zadok was said to be a pupil of Antigonus.—Schürer, *The Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*. Div. II. vol. ii. p. 32, note (translation).]

Upon the whole, the influence of the Sadducees, who, if they cannot strictly be designated by the modern name "rationalists," yet laid themselves open to the charges of indifferentism and practical infidelity, was not calculated to be beneficial; and, as they rejected along with the "traditions of the elders" much that was not only precious in itself but prized by the people, and their pride, different from that of the Pharisee, was more offensive to the common Jew, their influence was not great, and was the less likely therefore to draw down upon their heads the indignant denunciations of Him who came to infuse a new religious spirit into the nation. The traditions of the fathers, and the prescriptions and exactions of the schools, had become so numerous and minute that it was impossible for ordinary men to make themselves acquainted with them, still more to observe them. But what was impossible for the many was undertaken by the few, who, however, were not contemptible from their number, being estimated to have numbered six thousand at the time of Christ's appearing, when they also commanded great esteem and admiration as setting themselves to a task which the common man found impracticable, but regarded as praiseworthy and well-pleasing to God. As "separated" from the common men they bear their name, *Pherushim*, "Pharisees." This derivation is hardly questioned now, though some have traced the word to פּוֹרֵשׁ, "expounder of the law." The Pharisees took their rise in the Chasidim, the strict party in the time of the Maccabees, which was distinguished by repugnance to everything Hellenic.

Of their exaggerations in various directions, and frequently at the sacrifice of the weightier matters of the law, we have numerous examples in the gospels. The extraordinary strictness with which they performed duties supposed by them to be necessary for the preservation or restoration of legal purity, and the painful extent and minuteness of their observances in this direction, are illustrated by the story of the Pharisee (a priest), who subjected the golden candlestick itself to a lustration after a feast, and thus provoked the scoff of the Sadducees, "These men will in the end set themselves to cleanse the sun." The idea was that all the vessels and furniture of the temple should undergo purification after a

feast, as possibly pollution might have been contracted from the touch of an unclean person. As this extravagant concern about things merely outward coexisted with the deliberate evasion and subversion of the most sacred moral precepts,—as, in particular, the fifth commandment,—we can understand the holy indignation of the words, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also." Of their prayers and fasting, their phylacteries and tithe-payment, and all the multitudinous rites and practices by which, to use their own phrase, they set a hedge about the law—a hedge within which the law was really straitened and stunted, not, as they imagined, protected and enriched, and blossoming and fructifying to their everlasting glory,—on all this it is unnecessary to dwell. But the complaint is sometimes raised, and not without reason, that injustice is done to the Pharisees by the unmitigated and indiscriminating censure and reprobation which many have heaped upon them. They were the patriots of Israel. While the Sadducees were open to foreign influence, and, denying a future, sought to make the best of the present world, not only by submitting to the conqueror but by suing his favour, the Pharisees held fast the idea of Jewish nationality; and though the idea, as they held it, contained much that was false and dangerous, they cherished it and were devoted to it. Reuss[1] reminds us that "their fortune and their blood were readily sacrificed to their country when it required them, and when an insurrection offered any chance of success. From their ranks came the heroic phalanx of the Maccabees and their adherents, who struck to the heart the power of the Seleucidæ, and raised anew the flag of liberty on the walls of Zion.[2] Then began the desperate resistance and heroic struggle which renewed the ancient glory of the people of God, extorted the admiration of Rome and Sparta, and led to

[1] [*Histoire de Théologie Chrétienne au Siècle Apostolique*, p. 64.]

[2] The reference is to the time (175–164 B.C.) when Antiochus Epiphanes took possession of the holy city, caused the sacred books to be burned, and the sanctuary to be profaned, and would have compelled the Jews to take part in the idolatrous worship of the Greeks.

the recovery of Jerusalem by Judas Maccabeus, and the purification of the temple from the traces of idolatry." It was the Pharisees, Reuss reminds us further, "who raised incessant embarrassments and obstacles to the government and policy of Herod the Great. It was they who had the courage to defy the Roman colossus, and who quailed not when its iron club was raised to crush them." "Under their influence," he adds, however, "the national sentiment ended by becoming a political fanaticism, and found itself incessantly engaged in desperate struggles provoked by an instinctive antipathy, as imprudent as it was indestructible. The political dissolution of the nation was thus in great part hastened, but its very ruin has turned in some sort to the glory of the Pharisees. For if, of all the ancient communities, the Jewish community alone has survived a catastrophe which seemed to bring inevitable annihilation, it is because no other nationality was founded on a basis so solid or so independent of any political form whatever." Whether it be considered glorious in the Pharisees, it may be admitted that they, above all others, were the bearers and representatives of the energetic and passionate national sentiment that, under God and in fulfilment of His prophetic word, has led to the preservation of the Jewish people through so many long centuries and so many cruel persecutions.

This strong national sentiment was nourished not merely by the recollection of the past, but also, and still more, by the hopes of the future. The Jewish nation was not only, as the Scriptures represent it to be, a nation of priests, but, as Philo says, a nation of prophets; they were doubtless, that is to say, the channel of Divine revelation to the other nations of the world, but of a revelation which essentially contained exceeding great and precious promises.

And here is perhaps the deepest difference between the Pharisees and Sadducees. The latter not only denied the resurrection of the body and the doctrine of rewards and punishments in a future life, but had no ideal goal either on this side or on that side of death. The Pharisees clung to the promises which had animated their forefathers in the struggle with the Syrian. They appear to have delighted particularly in the Book of Daniel, which was a legacy all the

more precious because of the courage and devotion it had been the means of inspiring in the days of the Maccabees. Such a passage as Daniel vii. 9–27, which had no meaning or power for the Sadducees, was for them living and vitalising. Here was a goal set before the Pharisee, at which the Sadducee, who was content with the present and desired no great world-catastrophe, might mock, but which, being sought and longed for, was well fitted—we may see something similar in the Mohammedans—to inspire not only with zeal but with fanaticism men whose notion of religion was fundamentally erroneous.

And only in this view—only because they took a false view of religion, because the pure spiritual element was wanting or extremely weak—can we charge the Pharisees, as they are so often charged, with "a dead formalism." They were not men who went through a routine of duties with no conscious motive or aim. Their formalism, if we speak of them generally, was living and passionate, often furious and fanatical. Dead, however, it was, inasmuch as the true principle of obedience to God was unknown or inoperative. When we speak of the lifeless religion of the Pharisee, we should be careful to make it plain that this is what we mean.

Let us, again, see that we understand and make intelligible what is meant when we speak of the Pharisees in New Testament phraseology as hypocrites. No party has ever given more undeniable evidence of the sincerity and energy of their convictions. Untrue they were, however, to the deep spiritual nature of man. They were self-deceivers, and they were justly termed hypocrites, according to the use of the word current at the time, as offering a show of piety and virtue while the heart was far from being right with God. The Pharisee was a hypocrite, but he sincerely believed what he said when he prayed thus: "God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are: extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican." That Saul of Tarsus was most sincere in his Pharisaism we have his own repeated testimony, and he who called himself the "chief of sinners" was not in any wise tempted to paint himself as, in his unconverted state, different from what he really had been. But the admission of the sincerity of the Pharisees (to speak of them generally)

does not at all wipe out the reproach of extraordinary and, in our eyes at least, often ridiculous ostentation. The motive for performing their works with which Jesus Himself so often charges them was constantly present and powerful. It does not follow, however, that they had no other. They trusted that they were commending themselves to God as well as to the people; and in reading the words employed again and again by Jesus, "Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward," we are not to understand that, in winning the admiration of men, they had all the reward they looked for—they certainly looked for something ulterior and more glorious—but all the reward that could follow works of self-righteousness and vanity.

If now it be asked why Jesus assails the Pharisees with such unsparing severity and indignation, we are already prepared in some measure to answer the question. Their religion was not spiritual. They shut their hearts against the great fundamental point of our Lord's teaching—that the kingdom of God does not exist at all unless it begins within the man. Along with this, however, since the religion of the Sadducees also was far from being spiritual, it is necessary to keep in view the fact that they were the active and popular party. The influence of the Sadducees, as has been said, was comparatively slight, and they were not the men to use their power fanatically; but the Pharisees offered the most formidable opposition to the new Teacher and His doctrine—an opposition vehement, obstinate, unrelenting, and at length, in the eye of man, successful. Notwithstanding all this, their zeal and earnestness, their trust and their hopes, quickened and sustained the popular interest in matters of religion, and offered more points of contact for the pure faith than were offered by the cold and lifeless system of their rivals.

But, to use the common expression, there were Pharisees and Pharisees, as might be supposed even if we did not know of the famous schools of Shammai and Hillel. The founders of these schools were contemporaneous, and lived shortly before the Advent. The former was strict and harsh—so much so that, as is related of him, he even required that sucklings should be made to keep the fast of the great day of atonement. The latter was so mild that no man could

put him out of temper. Once a man tried it for a wager of 400 denarii, but the wager was lost. It has often been related how a foreigner appeared before Shammai and said, "Make me a proselyte, but you must teach me the whole law while I stand on one foot." Shammai was enraged, and drove him away. The stranger went to Hillel, and addressed to him the same language. The reply was: "I will teach you the law in one word. Do not to your neighbour what you would not have your neighbour do unto you." It can easily be inferred from this that the one would, as was actually the case, interpret and apply the law in a very different spirit from the other. And we ought to remember in this case, as in other cases, that the strong language used, and often used justly, of a party, is not to be understood as equally applicable to all its members.

While the common Jews regarded all other nations as unclean, and while the Pharisees formed a party distinct from the common Jews, though moving in the midst of them and acting constantly and powerfully upon them, the Essenes, the only party who can with propriety be designated a sect, separated themselves from all the world. Baur, in speaking of the preparation for Christianity on Jewish soil, contents himself with a passing allusion to the two parties who stand so conspicuously before us in the Gospels, but calls attention particularly to the Essenes, who are not mentioned there, and who, if they be there referred to at all, are so only in the way of indirect and obscure allusion. He considers them worthy of special notice, because, although Christianity by no means derived its origin from them, it is unmistakable that the religious view of life taken by the Essenes is far more nearly akin to the spirit of primitive Christianity than all that by which we know the Pharisees and Sadducees to have been characterised. Though they put great value on outward acts and usages their religion had at the same time a far more spiritual character than that of the rest of their countrymen.

Their high life-task was to elevate themselves above the things of sense. As physicians of souls—such is the meaning of their name—as physicians, above all, of their own soul, they were disposed to employ every means which seemed

fitted to impart to the soul a healthy vigorous life, and to keep their mind constantly open for the influences and revelations of the higher world.

The religiousness or religiosity of the whole people had been deepened, and in some degree purified, by the captivity of Babylon and subsequent calamities. To the same suffering some have traced the peculiarly profound religiosity of the Essenes (Ἐσσαῖοι, Philo). Thus Reuss, speaking of Ebionism as the "tendency" or "direction," in contradistinction to the sect in which it eventually embodied itself, says: "Bloody wars, an independence stormy and in the end illusory, agitated the country, almost without interruption, during two centuries. There were individuals upon whom oppression weighed more heavily than on the body of the nation. Ill-treatment of every kind—religious persecutions, most iniquitous spoliations, burdensome imposts, the miseries of war, the railleries of paganism, the venality of judges, and all the sad train of vexations which accompany a bad government—taught many Jews to seek Jehovah elsewhere than in the courts of the Temple, and to speak to Him more directly than by the mouth of a priest or by the smoke of his incense. . . . Union and peace with God became the principal thing; the consciousness of this peace was the supreme felicity to which every individual ought to aspire, and the renunciation of all earthly goods was a small price to pay for it. This sentiment, indeed, did not rise to all the purity of true piety. It had much in common with Pharisaism; it was tainted with the same spirit of pride and particularism.[1] The renunciation of the world was not exempt from a certain satisfaction with self, and the contempt of riches was often allied with hatred of those who possessed them. The endurance of poverty and tribulation came to be regarded by the sufferer as a proof and seal of his personal righteousness and acceptance with God."[2]

The traveller, passing from Jerusalem through the desolate region which led down to the Dead Sea, encountered colonists of this sect whose melancholy bearing and regulated, con-

[1] ["Il était né sur le sol du Judaïsme, et le Judaïsme lui avait légué une partie de son esprit pharisaïque et particulariste."]

[2] [*Histoire de Théologie Chrétienne au Siècle Apostolique.* Tome prem. p. 117.]

strained life made upon him the impression that here a multitude of men who had found existence too heavy a burden were preparing themselves, not for the kingdom of God, as the Jews generally conceived of it, but for death.

Pliny's description of them is quoted or referred to by almost all historians who notice this sect, standing out as it does peculiar among the peculiar people:

"On the western border of that lake dwell the Essenes, at a sufficient distance from the shore to avoid its pestilent effluvia. A race entirely by themselves, and, beyond every other in the world, deserving of wonder; men living in communion with nature, without wives, without money. Every day their number is replenished by a new troop of settlers, since they are much visited by those whom the reverses of fortune have driven, tired of the world, to that mode of living. Thus happens what might seem incredible, that a community, in which no one is born, yet continues to subsist through the lapse of centuries. So fruitful for them is disgust of life in others."[1] There were, however, among the Essenes, as among the Pharisees, some more, and some less rigid. In some of their settlements, for example, marriage was permitted, in others it was not. And there were, on the one hand, Essenes who did not associate with their brethren in any settlement, but lived as hermits by solitary mountain streams, where they bathed themselves day and night, and nourished themselves on wild herbs; and, on the other hand, there were friends and adherents of the Essenes scattered through the towns and villages who adopted their principles more or less fully, and followed their way of life more or less closely.

The novice who came to one of the settlements was required to spend a year in purification and preparation before he was admitted to the common bath. Two years more had to elapse before he was admitted to the common meal, though in the meantime he was permitted to be present at the worship of God. After his formal admission it was unlawful for him to partake of food which had not been prepared by an Essene. Even Roman torture could not compel

[1] *Nat. Hist.* v. 15.

captives of this sect to partake of food prepared by the unclean.

A consequence of their mode of life was the community of goods. The great, if not the sole distinction which they recognised was that of clean and unclean — a higher or a lower degree of purity. So exalted and just were their notions of man's dignity that the distinction of master and slave was more odious to them than that of rich and poor. The man that set foot on their colonies was a free man. They cultivated the love of truth, and inculcated mutual trust, abhorring oaths, and tolerating none except, it is said, on the occasion of the admission of new members to their communities, when an oath, as singular as it was solemn, was administered, containing this, among other things, that the names of the angels about to be communicated should never be divulged to the uninitiated. Josephus is given as the authority for this statement, and he undoubtedly uses the word "oath"; but, if we look at the whole passage in the Jewish historian, it does appear very questionable whether the Essenes themselves would have called it by that name, or regarded it as an exception to their principle that a man's yea should be yea, and his nay, nay. We should certainly be inclined to use the word "vows." The proselyte, Josephus tell us, takes "tremendous oaths, that, in the first place, he will exercise piety towards God, and then that he will observe justice towards men, and that he will do no harm to any one, either of his own accord or by the command of others; that he will always hate the wicked, and be assistant to the righteous; that he will ever show fidelity to all men, and especially to those in authority"—and so on—ending with the promise never to reveal the "names of the angels." All this, we can perceive, is of the nature of a vow, and though Josephus drops the word oath, he does not seem to be conscious of any inconsistency between it and the strong statement which he himself makes in the immediately preceding paragraph: "They are the ministers of peace; whatsoever they say also is firmer than an oath; but swearing is avoided by them, and they esteem it worse than perjury: for they say, that he who cannot be believed without [swearing by] God is already condemned."[1]

[1] *Wars*, Bk. II. ch. viii. §§ 7 and 6 (Whiston).

Their doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul, and their view of the body as its temporary prison, and, still more, the Greek dress in which their tenets and peculiarities were naturally presented by Philo and Josephus, have led many to trace a connection between them and the Platonism of Alexandria; but, if it be necessary to go beyond the bounds of the Holy Land at all in accounting for their origin, there seems greater probability in the supposition that those peculiar tenets were derived from an oriental source, and in confirmation of this opinion is adduced their daily custom of turning reverently towards the rising sun and singing to him ancient hymns, purporting that his beams ought not to fall on anything impure.

While they employed themselves in agriculture and the breeding of bees and cattle, they devoted themselves very specially to the study of diseases and the art of healing them, and to this circumstance they are thought by some to owe their name, though, as has been already said, it appears rather to be used of the soul. This, too, as well as the things mentioned by Josephus, has a part in accounting for their longevity. "They are long-lived also," says he, "insomuch that many of them live above a hundred years, by means of the simplicity of their diet,—nay, as I think, by means of the regular course of life they observe also." (He refers here to their abstinence from animal food.) We may go on with the passage in proof that, as has been already stated, the "courage of their opinions" was unconquerable. "They contemn the miseries of life," he continues, "and are above pain by the generosity of their mind. And as for death, if it will be for their glory, they esteem it better than living always; and, indeed, our war with the Romans gave abundant evidence what great souls they had in their trials, wherein, although they were tortured and distorted, burnt and torn to pieces, and went through all kinds of instruments of torment, that they might be forced either to blaspheme their legislator or to eat what was forbidden them, yet could they not be made to do either of them, no, nor once to flatter their tormentors, or to shed a tear; but they smiled on their very pains, and laughed those to scorn who inflicted the torments upon them, and resigned up their

souls with great alacrity, as expecting to receive them again." [1]

We have now mentioned the principal points known of the Essenes, though some writers dwell also on the gift of prophecy which they claim, and for which some members of the sect acquired an extraordinary reputation, not only among the people but at the Jewish court. But the claim is in no wise surprising in men devoted to a life of rigid asceticism. Such persons have frequently cherished the belief that, by the process which enabled them to rise above the gross world of sense to things spiritual and divine, their vision was purged to discern the things that were to come hereafter.

Be it with this alleged gift as it may, we cannot but honour the Essenes for their love of truth, their hatred of war and slavery, their fidelity to their convictions, and, though with some reservation, their mutual love and service, carried to such a point that no man counted ought that he possessed to be his own. The question may well be put, "Where could the gospel preached to the poor find more receptive hearts than among these, the quiet of the land, whose piety contained so much that was akin to Christianity, and especially to Christianity in its first appearance?" [2] Much, indeed, they had that was akin to the gospel. And yet, it must be added on the other side, they had much that was utterly alien to it. For not only the spirit of self-righteousness and self-sufficiency, — which they had in common with the Pharisees,—but their idea of the human body, which to them was a prison and not a temple, and their idea of human life as worthily led only when devoted to contemplation and asceticism, in outward separation from the unclean multitude (including the Pharisee who, notwithstanding the sad countenance he wore, drew upon himself from the still more rigid Essene the charge of frivolity)—these things were fundamentally at variance with the teaching of the Divine Master,

[1] *Wars*, Bk. II. ch. viii. § 10. The Essenes appear to have sent gifts to the Temple. They believed in a future state, conceiving the place of reward as one of delight and warmth, that of punishment as one of gloom and cold. Blunt adopts the view that the books containing their doctrines were supposed by them to have been written by angels.

[2] [Baur.]

who came to make all things new, and they prove irresistibly, notwithstanding all the points of resemblance that may be unhesitatingly recognised, that Christ's religion was not the offspring—the natural development—of the tenets which these men held, and the manner of life they followed.

CHAPTER III.

THE JEWS OF THE DISPERSION.

Let us now speak shortly of the Jews living beyond the borders of Palestine. A comparatively small number of them had taken advantage of the permission of Cyrus to return to their native land (536 B.C.).[1] The great part remained behind in Babylon, and thence spread themselves in the adjacent regions. Alexander the Great permitted a colony of Jews to settle in the celebrated city to which he gave his name, and they soon became numerous in other parts of Africa. Their activity, and the spirit of trade which took hold of them, and for which they have been so remarkably distinguished in subsequent ages, led them also to Syria and Asia Minor, and, indeed, in the time of Augustus, enterprising members of the chosen nation were found in all parts of the Roman Empire.

In contradistinction to the inhabitants of Palestine, they were called the Jews of the Dispersion (*οἱ ἐν τῇ διασπορᾷ*). They loved, however, to maintain a connection with the mother country, especially with the capital; and they recognised the authority of the supreme religious court, were wont to pay the annual contribution for the support of the temple (*τὸ δίδραχμον*), and sent offerings and made pilgrimages to the Holy City. But though, under the most various relations, they showed a remarkable attachment to the religion of their fathers, and retained a profound sentiment of nationality, there gradually manifested itself a disposition, which is the less wonderful that the same disposition showed itself in some degree in the mother-country itself, to accommodate themselves as far as possible to foreign peculiarities. We should expect that this disposition, existing in some degree at the

[1] [Driver (*Isaiah: His Life and Times*) and Sayce (*Introduction to the Books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther*) give 538 B.C. as the date of the return. Sayce suggests that Ezra ii. 64 and Neh. vii. 66 may mean heads of families.]

very centre of the Jewish national life, would show itself in far greater strength at a distance. This happened particularly in Persia and Egypt. As to the influence of Parsism, it is impossible now to go into particulars, but we shall quote a very interesting passage from Dean Milman, in which he touches a point common to it with the Alexandrian philosophy and with other systems: "Wherever any approximation had been made to the sublime truth of the one great First Cause, either awful religious reverence or philosophic abstraction had removed the primal Deity entirely beyond the sphere of human sense, and supposed that the intercourse of the Divinity with man, the moral government, and even the original Creation, had been carried on by the intermediate agency, either, in oriental language, of an Emanation, or, in Platonic, of the Wisdom, Reason, or Intelligence, of the one Supreme. This being was more or less distinctly impersonated, according to the more popular or the more philosophic, the more material or more abstract notions of the age or people. This was the doctrine from the Ganges, or even from the shores of the Yellow Sea, to the Ilissus; it was the fundamental principle of the Indian religion and Indian philosophy; it was a basis of Zoroastrianism, it was pure Platonism, it was the Platonic Judaism of the Alexandrian school. Many fine passages might be quoted from Philo on the impossibility that the first self-existing Being should become cognizable to the sense of man; and even in Palestine, no doubt, John the Baptist, and our Lord Himself, spoke no new doctrine, but rather the common sentiment of the more enlightened, when they declared that 'no man had seen God at any time.' In conformity with this principle, the Jews, in the interpretation of the older Scriptures, instead of direct and sensible communication from the one great Deity, had interposed either one or more intermediate beings, as the channels of communication. According to one accredited tradition alluded to by St. Stephen, the law was delivered 'by the disposition of angels;' according to another, this office was delegated to a single angel, sometimes called the Angel of the Law, at others the Metatron. But the more ordinary representative, as it were, of God to the sense and mind of man was the Memra, or the Divine Word; and it is remarkable that the same

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appellation is found in the Indian, the Persian, the Platonic, and the Alexandrian systems. By the Targumists, the earliest Jewish commentators on the Scriptures, this term had already been applied to the Messiah; nor is it necessary to observe the manner in which it has been sanctified by its introduction into the Christian scheme. From this remarkable uniformity of conception, and coincidence of language, has sometimes been assumed a common tradition, generally disseminated throughout the race of man. I should be content with receiving it as the general acquiescence of the human mind in the necessity of some mediation between the pure spiritual nature of the Deity and the intellectual and moral being of man, of which the sublimest and simplest, and therefore the most natural development, was the revelation of God in Christ, in the inadequate language of our version of the original, 'the brightness of (God's) glory and the express image of His person.'"[1]

The susceptibility of foreign influences was shown most strikingly in Alexandria, where it would appear that even three centuries before Christ many of the Jews had lost the knowledge of the language spoken by their fathers, so that a Greek translation of the Old Testament Scriptures became necessary. This they received in the Septuagint, which was begun in the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus, about 280 B.C. Already in this translation the influence of Grecian culture is plainly perceptible in a tendency to evade or to ignore anthropomorphic expressions which might be offensive to the philosophical. Thus, in Ex. xxiv. 9 we read: "Then went up Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel. And they saw the God of Israel; and there was under His feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel He laid not His hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink." In the tenth verse the rendering is, *εἶδον τὸν τόπον οὗ εἱστήκει ὁ θεὸς τοῦ Ἰσραήλ*: "They saw the place where the God of Israel stood;" and in the eleventh verse, *ὤφθησαν ἐν τῷ τόπῳ τοῦ θεοῦ*: "They appeared in the place of God."

In Gen. xxxii. 30, on the other hand, no such freedom is

[1] [*History of Christianity from the Birth of Christ*, etc., vol. i. ch. i. p. 70 (1883).]

used by the Seventy. We have the language as in our version, because, in all probability, the translators trusted to their readers inferring from the immediate context that it was not the supreme God but His messenger who was introduced in the narrative. In like manner the Seventy evince a disposition to avoid anthropopathic expressions as likely to prove not less offensive to the cultivated. Thus the translation of Gen. vi. 6, "And it repented the Lord that He had made man upon the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart," is, *καὶ ἐνεθυμήθη ὁ θεὸς ὅτι ἐποίησε τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς. καὶ διενοήθη.*

Aristobulus, who is commonly regarded as the father of the Alexandrian philosophy, of which Philo is the most distinguished representative, is supposed by some to be one of the Seventy. In a poem ascribed to him, God is called the fashioner of the world instead of its creator, and he is accordingly understood to have held the pre-existence and eternity of matter. Aristobulus was a courtier and scholar. He published a commentary on the Pentateuch, which he presented to his sovereign with a preface in which he was careful to explain that such terms as "eyes," "feet," and "arms," when applied to the Deity, were not to be understood literally.

But the great representative of the Alexandrian philosophy was Philo. He was a contemporary of Jesus, and was born about a quarter of a century before Him. He had the honour of being chosen by his fellow-citizens to represent them in an embassy to Caligula. In a city which, like Rome itself, was more than the capital of a country; which was the world-market; which connected East and West not only by bonds of trade and commerce, but by bonds of thought and culture, even as in its vast library were collected the literary treasures of all lands—in a city where, we are told, the temple of Jupiter rose in white marble beside the temple of Serapis, and where the Jewish synagogue stood not far from either; where systems met, and where, if they did not destroy each other, it was natural that they should amalgamate: there rose Philo, the author indeed of a system which could not endure, but the representative and bearer, if not in *any* case the originator, of ideas which subsequently exerted a deep and widespread influence on the Church. But if his name is

surrounded with a lustre such as had belonged to no Jew since the prophetic light had ceased to shine in the darkness, he won his renown in setting himself to the accomplishment of an impossible task. Convinced, on the one hand, of the truth of the Jewish religion, resting as it did upon Divine revelation, and, on the other hand, swayed by Greek speculation, and particularly by the teaching of Plato and Zeno, he made it his great object to found, by proving the harmony of both, a universal philosophy and religion—one which should be equally acceptable to Jews and to Greeks, neither a stumbling-block to the former nor foolishness to the latter, but to both, Divine truth and wisdom. As the best and most suitable means for the attainment of this end he had recourse to the method of allegorical interpretation, by which, according to his own idea, he drew the Divine thoughts from behind the veil of the letter—such thoughts, that is, as he could bring into harmony with his philosophical theories. By this method he could easily, as it has been somewhat strongly put, maintain the character of the believer according to the letter, while he was an apostate according to the spirit. A striking example of the length to which this allegorical method was carried by Philo is given by Reuss.[1] It was applied not only to rites and institutions, but to the most conspicuous historical personages. The three patriarchs are not regarded as men who really lived. Their acts, their travels, their domestic relations, are so many images or symbols, to which it is the business of exegesis to attach the proper spiritual signification. They represent virtue under three different aspects: Abraham, virtue achieved by the efforts of the understanding; Isaac, virtue realised by natural instinct; and Jacob, virtue attained by asceticism and trial.

Philo sets out from the just idea that God is the absolute, eternal, and invisible Being. This God is separated from the material universe by an abyss which excludes all idea of immediate contact. What He is in Himself we cannot comprehend: *ὄργανον οὐδὲν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἔχομεν ᾧ δυνησόμεθα ἐκεῖνο φαντασιασθῆναι* (by which we can represent Him to ourselves.)[2] If you seek Him in creation, you find but His shadow. This absolute, incomprehensible, ineffable One, is

[1] *Hist. de Théol. Chrét.* i. p. 110. [2] [*De Nominum Mutatione.*]

not the Creator of matter: matter existed from all eternity. If He is to be called, as the Jew Aristobulus termed Him, the "fashioner of the world," it is yet impossible that He could be the author of the Kosmos directly and immediately: *οὐ γὰρ ἦν θέμις ὕλης ψαύειν τὸν μακάριον*: "for it was not permitted—it was not possible—for the blessed God to come in contact with matter."[1] He has arranged the universe by means of the λόγος, which is represented, now as one, now as manifold, and in which the Mosaic creative word, the King of Israel's personification of wisdom, and Plato's world of ideas appear to coalesce. Though Philo has been charged with incoherence, yet his λόγος *προφορικός* (as distinguished from the λόγος *ἐνδιάθετος*, the world of ideas as existing in the Divine mind) is an intelligible conception, and may be briefly described as that by which the infinite God reveals Himself in the finite world, this finite world being, however, an imperfect copy of the *κόσμος νοητός*. Neander quotes some lofty expressions which Philo used concerning the ancient religion, which he endeavoured to reconcile with speculative thought. "'That,' he says, 'which is the portion only of a few disciples of a truly genuine philosophy, the knowledge of the Highest, has by law and custom become the inheritance of the whole Jewish people,' and he calls the Jews priests and prophets for all mankind." It is to be noticed, however, that, even in the language quoted, the results of the study of philosophy, and the revelations made by God to Israel, are represented as identical; but that these results, as apprehended by Philo, were essentially different from the religion with which they are represented as harmonising. Neander himself informs us when he says that "to the sensuous anthropomorphism and anthropopathism, which characterised the grosser mode of apprehension among the Alexandrian Jews, Philo opposed a one-sided spiritualism, whereby the idea of God was emptied of all determinate contents. The real side of the Old Testament Theism, the objective truth and reality, which is the basis of the Old Testament notions of God's holiness, of His wrath, and of His retributive justice, were by this means totally misapprehended, and all such ideas of God were explained

[1] [*De Sacrificantibus.*]

away by a spiritualism far better suited to the Brahminic or the Buddhistic system, than to the characteristic peculiarity of the religion of the Old Testament." But while Philo is complained of, with too good reason, for having sapped the base of the religion whose high priest, according to his own exalted notion, offered sacrifice not for the Jews only but for the entire race of man,—while he is accused of annihilating it by the means he took to transfigure and recommend it,—it must be admitted that he did more than any other writer to diffuse ideas akin to those which had been indicated in the Old Testament, especially in the Proverbs, and which came forth fully developed in the New Testament doctrine of the Eternal Word.

Philo's system tended to asceticism. His high ideal has an oriental character. It consists in flying from one's self, "in rising above the individual to the universal spirit, the last refuge of the soul." This tendency, however, was controlled in Philo himself, and did not lead to the same results as in many who adhered to his religious philosophy. It did not drive him permanently from the world. In remarkable language, such as there has often been occasion to employ since, he says: "Often I did leave kindred, friends, and country, and retire into the wilderness, that I might raise my thoughts to worthy contemplations; but I gained nothing thereby. My thoughts, either distracted or wounded by some impure impression, fell into the very opposite current. Sometimes, when God dispels the tumult from my breast, in the midst of thousands, I find myself alone with my soul. Thus He teaches me that it is not change of place that brings evil or good, but that all depends on that God who steers the ship of the soul in whatever direction He pleases." [1]

There was formed, however, an ascetical union, in many respects resembling the Essenes, the name of which, *θεραπευταί*, is supposed by some to have the same meaning, "healers," but seems, according to Philo, to denote simply persons devoted to the worship of God. In a land which was subsequently the birthplace of the Christian anchorite, around the Lake Moeris, not far from Alexandria, they dwelt in cells and lived on bread and water, of which it appears they were

[1] Quoted by Neander, vol. i. p. 82.

not wont to partake before sunset, being ashamed to show their dependence on the world of sense while it shone. Even from this most scanty fare they frequently fasted, that the soul might be thoroughly purified for the contemplation of Divine things. It is to be noticed that, even as the Essenes were not confined to the borders of the Dead Sea, but had spiritual connections in the cities and villages, so there were θεραπευταί, or, if that name is to be restricted to those who retired into solitude, rigid ascetics, who practised their principles without leaving the world—sometimes under a roof where the other members of the family fared sumptuously, and where offence was taken at their singular abstemiousness.[1]

The system of religious philosophy in which this asceticism originated is a notable example of the influence of the Gentile world on the Jews of the Dispersion; but through the breaches, if we may use the expression, that had been made in the old partition-wall, Jewish ideas might pass to the Gentiles as well as Gentile ideas to the Jews. This was actually the case. The peculiarity of the Jewish religion, which did not, like foreign heathen systems, admit of amalgamation with the religion of the Roman State (although Philo tried to amalgamate it with philosophy), and the tenacity with which the Jews held fast their convictions, did indeed exasperate the minds of many against them, and drew even from Tacitus the strong expression *deterrima gens* (*Hist.* v. 5). But that which both the historians and poets called superstition, and pestilent superstition, had its attractions for not a few. In an age when neither the popular faith nor any of the prevalent systems of philosophy could give satisfaction, multitudes, we know, had recourse to jugglers and Thaumaturgi (θαυματουργοί), and it cannot be matter of astonishment that at the same time, moved by better and higher impulses than those of mere superstition, some were drawn to the faith of the chosen people, who, being scattered through all the most

[1] ["The question whether the Therapeutae were offshoots of the Essenes or *vice versa* . . . must now be left undiscussed, since the only work which gives us any information concerning the Therapeutae, viz. Philo, *De Vita Contemplativa*, is certainly spurious, and the Therapeutae very probably Christian monks."—Schürer, *Jewish People*, Div. II. vol. ii. note, p. 218. But Lightfoot holds strongly to the authenticity of *De Vita* (*Colossians and Philemon*, p. 82, note).]

important provinces and cities of the empire, had, with the zeal for which they were distinguished, sown the germs of Divine knowledge, and made known throughout the world their hope of a new Divine kingdom.

The belief in one God, the Creator of heaven and earth—in an invisible, purely spiritual Being, who could be represented by no image—could not fail to commend itself to the reason of many among the heathens, and accordingly we see many among them, and particularly, as in the memorable instance of Cornelius of Cæsarea, among those who lived in Palestine, attach themselves to the Jewish monotheism. Such persons are usually divided into two classes, but there is some reason for reckoning them as three. There were those who had a certain sympathy with the Jewish religion, and even observed certain Jewish ceremonies, without becoming proselytes even in the looser sense of the word, *i.e.* proselytes of the gate (גֵּרֵי הַשַּׁעַר, *οἱ φοβούμενοι—οἱ σεβόμενοι τὸν θεόν*). The proselytes of the gate, who adopted the essential principles of the Jewish religion and the moral law of Moses without entering formally into the covenant relation with Jehovah, were far more numerous than those who did enter into this covenant—the proselytes of righteousness (גֵּרֵי הַצֶּדֶק), who underwent the rite of circumcision, and bound themselves to the observance of the entire system, ceremonial as well as moral and spiritual.[1] That these proselytes, gained, as in certain cases they were, by the restless, passionate zeal of the Pharisees, who compassed sea and land to reach their object, were sometimes poisoned with the worst principles of those who converted them, we know from the denunciations of Jesus Himself; but that the proselytes of the gate—the devout men and women with whom the first heralds of the Gospel so often came in contact—bridged the way beyond any other class between the heathen and the Jewish world, of this we have the plainest and amplest evidence in our earliest records, the Acts of the Apostles.

[1] [According to Schürer, however, there was no distinction among the "proselytes" (*προσήλυτοι*), who took upon themselves the observance of the whole Jewish law. The distinction lay between them and the *φοβούμενοι*, or *σεβόμενοι*, who observed only so much of the Law.—*Jewish People*, Div. II. vol. ii. § 31.]

CHAPTER IV.

THE SYNAGOGUE.

THE institution of the Synagogue may be dated as far back as the return from the Babylonish Captivity. It is justly regarded as the complement and necessary counterpoise of the centralisation of sacrificial worship. In the capital itself, when it happened—and it did sometimes happen—that the sacred offices of the Temple were filled by unfaithful, undevout, half-heathenish priests, the Synagogue was an asylum for those who revered the Word of God and held fast the ideas and the hopes of the Theocracy. Still more obviously was it fitted to become the focus in which the religious life of the Jews of the Dispersion was gathered and inflamed. "Our houses of prayer scattered throughout the land," said Philo, "are nothing else than institutions for the education of the people in prudence, bravery, moderation, and righteousness, piety, and holiness; in short, in every virtue which man should practise in relation to God and his fellow." Not only the Israelites who were scattered abroad but the inhabitants of the country towns in Palestine found some compensation in the worship of the Synagogue for absence from the services of the Temple, which was ever to them an object of love and veneration, though often turned into a house of merchandise, or den of thieves, or cage of unclean birds. In the Synagogue they could offer the sacrifice of prayer, and, as in the Temple, on days of high solemnity, the offerings were multiplied, so also in this assembly of the devout the number of prayers was on the same occasions increased, and at the very moment when the altar-fire burned at the heart of the nation, the Israelite at a distance, by lake, or sea, or river—at Capernaum or Alexandria, or Antioch—might feel himself symbolically taking part in the appointed worship of Jehovah; and, indeed, hardly had the great

seasons of pilgrimage such an effect in strengthening the sentiment of national unity as the common hours devoted to religion on the day of rest in the places "where prayer was wont to be made."

In using this phrase, we are speaking of the Synagogue proper. It is necessary to explain that, where there was a synagogue, there were usually attached to it some προσευχαί, which were used, however, not merely for prayer, but for legal washings, and were consequently erected as near the bank of a stream or the shore of the sea as possible, while synagogues were built by preference on heights towering above the houses of the town, or at the street corners, or at the gateways. This last site, it may be mentioned, was eligible in itself, and not merely chosen as being in accordance with the words of Proverbs: "Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the street: she crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the opening of the gates."

The rulers of the synagogue, whose business it was to take a general direction of the proceedings and to watch over order at the meetings, was surrounded with a college of presbyters, and also with a body of deacons, whose duties were similar to those assigned to the office-bearers of the same name of whose appointment we read in Acts vi. There was likewise the officer who is called "the minister" in our version (Luke iv. 20). So close is the correspondence in constitution between the Synagogue and the early Christian Church that, we are told, the choice of young men (νεανίσκοι) for the performance of certain services—as, for instance, the sad duty of carrying out the dead, of which we read in Acts v.—was borrowed from the former.

It frequently happened that special circles, drawn together by national ties, combined to erect a synagogue, which, of course, they came under obligation to support. Thus in Jerusalem, where it appears there were no fewer than four hundred and eighty synagogues, Jews from Alexandria, Cyrene, Cilicia, and other parts, had their separate places of worship. That rich individuals also sometimes built synagogues entirely at their own expense, appears from the well-known case of the centurion of Capernaum.

The services of the synagogue were often uncommonly

protracted, partly owing to the length of the prayers, which were not reduced from regard to the circumstance that the assembly offered them in an erect posture, and which, as we have seen, were extended and multiplied on the solemn feast-days. There is even quoted this saying of a Rabbi: "He who prolongs his prayer shall not go empty away." That the sentiment was by no means confined to an individual is evident from the censure pronounced by Jesus on those who thought they would be heard "for their much speaking." A most important part of the service was the reading of the Scripture, especially of the Thorah, or Law, which for this object was divided into 154 portions. When the sacred roll was produced by the officer, the ruler of the synagogue called upon one of those who sat in the chief seats to come forward and read. It was the original text that the reader used, but he paused at the end of each verse that the translator appointed for the purpose might give the Targum, *i.e.* the Aramaic paraphrase. It would seem, however, that when the custom of reading the law was introduced in the time of Ezra, the same person both read and gave the meaning (Neh. viii. 8). After the Thorah, the Prophets were also read in portions (Haphtara), and similarly translated, and then followed a discourse for the edification of the people, when the well-instructed scribe brought out of his treasure things new and old, as Jesus Himself did in the synagogue at Nazareth when He recalled the old narrations of Naaman the Syrian and of the widow of Sarepta, and startled His hearers by the application to Himself of Isaiah's prophecy: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor." In these meeting-places, which were the great institution by which the national education of the Jews was promoted, not only well-known members, but, as we learn from the New Testament, strangers, were sometimes invited to speak; and so there might arise contradiction and interruption, and the assembly might become not only excited but tempestuous. It even happened at times that after a meeting which lasted for many hours, and far into the evening, the multitude remained in front of the synagogue and continued to discuss in a way far from formal, and with oriental volubility and

vehemence, the questions that had already been treated within the walls.

In the Synagogue, the man who had hitherto been occupied with the plough, or in the boat, might speedily rise to the dignity of Rabbi, to which he was solemnly set apart by the imposition of hands, a key being at the same time delivered to him as the symbol of the exposition of Scripture. It detracted nothing from his reputation if he continued his former calling, which, indeed, was usually a necessity. He might be a tent-maker, or a needle-maker, or, like the great Rabbi Hillel, a day-labourer; none the less did the people salute him reverently in the market-place. The people were proud of their Rabbis, and called them the "crown of Israel."

If, even in the remotest parts, where frequently there was no one who had attained to the dignity of Rabbi, there was a synagogue, it was much. Its services nourished the religious spirit, and were a pledge and bond of union in the distant settlement. The outermost branches were nourished by the same sap as preserved and strengthened the stem. But here again, as so often we have cause to say, "Corruptio optimi pessima." Pure Monotheism and strong national sentiments were undoubtedly advanced, but the hedge which the scribes and Pharisees set about the Law was ever becoming more thick and thorny. The moral part was in danger of being wholly stifled by their additions; the Messianic hope became at once more gross and fanatical; and it is mournful to think that, in the multitude of synagogues, where, when the Temple was no more, the scattered Jews could still worship, it became the practice to curse the Christians and the Christian name.

CHAPTER V.

THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE JEWS.

On the political history of the Jews in the time immediately preceding the Advent, though it had undoubtedly its influence on their religious and moral life, I do not intend to dwell. I merely recall to you that, in the conflict for the throne which arose between Hyrcanus II. and Aristobulus II., the two sons of Jannæus, Pompey was nominated arbiter. The intervention of the Roman power was attended with the usual consequence—subjugation. In the year 63 B.C. Pompey stormed Jerusalem and led Aristobulus with a number of captive Jews to Rome. After a troublous period, filled with atrocious crimes, the house of the Maccabees was overthrown, and the Idumæan prince Herod was named king of Judæa by Octavian and Antony. If you read the history of that monarch, in which one dark tragedy is succeeded by another darker still, and, in particular, if you observe how the slightest hint of impending danger put him on the rack and turned his heart to stone, you will not be astonished at his command to massacre the babes; and you will feel that of all hyperbolical expressions there is hardly any that passes the phrase derived from his name and familiarly applied to every sort of outrageous extravagance. His end was horrible. Suffering at Jericho under a disease so disgusting that but few could remain with him, he desired to put an end to his torment with his own hand. He asked for an apple and for a knife with which to cut it, and he was about to plunge the instrument into his heart when the commander of his body-guard fell into his arms and prevented him. His cup was not yet drained. While he was writhing in the pains of death, his ear was suddenly filled with the jubilant shouts of the multitude as it exulted over the deliverance of Israel from the monster. Bloodthirsty he remained to his last breath.

With a madman's struggle he gathered himself up and gave command that all the elders of Judæa should be gathered together in the hippodrome, and at the moment he expired, cut down every man of them, that so those glad voices might be silenced, and there might be sorrow and sighing throughout the land. His was a miserable life, a tragic death, a hideous testament.[1]

Herod's magnificence was celebrated far beyond the bounds of Palestine. He possessed certain qualities in an uncommon degree, — courage in war for example, energy, fertility of resource,—and he was called the "Great." There was at least one, however, higher still in worldly position — the Emperor; and nothing could be more severe than the language of Augustus: "I had rather be one of Herod's swine than one of his children." The image of the monarch who died at Jericho long haunted the minds of the people. We can hardly conceive what a thrill would pass through a Jewish audience in the earliest times of the Church when, immediately after the narrative of Matthew in which that bloody form stands by the cradle of the Holy Child in whom Heaven's mercy became incarnate, there were read the words: "But when Herod was dead."

By his written will, which was confirmed by Augustus, his land was divided among his three sons—Archelaus, Antipas (Herodes Antipas), and Philip. Judæa, Samaria, and Idumæa fell to Archelaus, but, on his banishment in the year 6 A.D., his territory was entrusted to Roman procurators or governors, of whom the first was Coponius. Herod Antipas, so well known from the gospels for his adultery, his execution of the Baptist, and his conduct towards Jesus, for which he was called by Him "that fox," reigned over Galilee and Perœa for the long period of forty-three years. Philip received Batanæa, Ituræa, and Trachonitis. His subjects honoured him as a mild ruler, and the surrounding princes honoured him as a peaceable neighbour. He is said to have enjoyed the reputation of the good king Alcinous, who was content with a smaller revenue than he might reasonably have demanded, and who, wherever he journeyed, carried the seat of righteous judgment. He reigned for thirty-seven years.

[1] The dying wish was not fulfilled.

On the slope of Hermon, where his father had erected a temple to Augustus, he built the richly shaded and romantically situated Cæsarea Philippi, which some regard as the most beautiful place between Hermon and Hebron. He presents a remarkable contrast to his brother Archelaus, whose cruelty and misgovernment were so intolerable that Jews and Samaritans forgot their mutual enmity and took steps in common for the overthrow of the tyrant. Elders from both divisions were sent to Rome to accuse their merciless oppressor before the Emperor. It seems that Archelaus, like many other savage despots, was the victim of gross superstition. When Jew and Samaritan were thus made friends together in their common detestation of him, he had a dream, and, as he dreamed, he saw ten ears of corn which were eaten up of oxen. At that time none were in such repute as the Essenes for the gift of interpreting dreams, and accordingly an Essene, named Simon, was sent for. The oxen, the Essene explained, denoted a change, for they turn up the land in ploughing, and the ten ears of corn denoted the ten years of his reign. The case of the embassy was so strong that the interpretation was extremely likely to prove true. Five days after he was sent for to Rome, and he was banished thence among the Allobroges.

The hard lot of the people, caused by such tyranny as has been indicated, and also by the Roman plan of farming the taxes, which so naturally and generally led to cruelty and extortion, could not but intensify the Messianic hope, which ancient prophecy had entitled the people to cherish, and for which they were already known to the ends of the earth as a nation that, above all others, lived in the future. And, while it intensified it, it did not fail to give it at the same time a more worldly and violent character. Of this the rising of Judas, referred to by Gamaliel in the Acts, is the most notable proof. In the days of Quirinius, when the census was being taken for taxation, men's heads were turned with wild prophecies that the numbering of the people would be followed anew by a great mortality in Israel. Judas, the Galilean, of Gamala by the Lake of Gennesaret, arose, and the watchword he gave to his countrymen, many of them prepared for its reception by the lessons of the schools as well as by the pre-

dictions which were in circulation, was: "No Lord but Jehovah, no tax but the temple tax, no friend but the zealot." Judas was a brave fanatic. Though he could maintain himself but two months, and those whom he had gathered to himself were, as Gamaliel said truly enough, scattered, he was yet one of the chief instruments of Providence in accelerating the destruction of Jerusalem. The fire that he had kindled was not one that could be quenched by his blood. He left four sons, who inherited his hatred of Rome and his most lamentable infatuation, and of whom none died on a sick-bed. At length, at the end of the Jewish war, a generation after Gamaliel's speech, when there was nothing more to hold in the land than a single fortress,—the fortress of Masada,—it was a grandson of Judas of Galilee, Eleazar, who commanded it. When it could no longer be held, he would not yield. There is hardly anything more affecting in history than his last words and his fate. It was his fixed resolve that the hungry victor should have nothing but ashes and corpses. "We were the very first that revolted from them, and we are the last that fight against them. God is favourable no more. Had He been favourable, or been out in a lesser degree displeased with us, He had not overlooked the destruction of so many men, or delivered His most holy city to be burnt and demolished by our enemies. I cannot but wish that we had all died when Jerusalem was destroyed, but now let us make haste. Let us pity ourselves, our children, and our wives. Our hands are still at liberty and have a sword in them. Let us die before we become slaves." The historian tells us how they killed one another and burned all that they had "Yet," he adds, "was there an ancient woman, and another who was of kin to Eleazar, and superior to most women in prudence and learning, with five children, who had concealed themselves in caverns under ground, and had carried water thither for their drink, and were hidden there when the rest were intent upon the slaughter of one another. These others were nine hundred and sixty in number."[1]

It appears that there were two false prophets of the name of Theudas. Besides the one who is mentioned in the Acts

[1] Josephus, *Wars*, Bk. vii. chaps. vii. and ix. [The first passage in the text seems not to be an exact quotation.]

of the Apostles, there was one who arose after the date of Gamaliel's speech, in the year 45 or 46 A.D., when Fadus was procurator. In the account given us of the rising of this Theudas, we see the Jews still seeking after a sign and still believing that the Kingdom of God would come with observation. He "persuaded a great part of the people to take their effects with them, and follow him to the river Jordan; for he told them that he was a prophet, and that he would, by his own command, divide the river, and offered them an easy passage over it; and many were deluded by his words." But Fadus "sent a troop of horsemen out against them, who, falling upon them unexpectedly, slew many of them, and took many of them alive." [1]

We have another illustration of the Jewish demand for a sign and of the nature of the Messianic expectations, as well as of the readiness of false prophets to meet them, in him with whom the chief captain of the band would have identified Paul: "Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?" (Acts xxi. 38). There came out of Egypt, says the Jewish historian, one that said he was a prophet, and advised the multitude of the common people to go along with him to the Mount of Olives, promising that the walls of Jerusalem would fall down at his command, and that he would lead them triumphantly into the city which had been desecrated by the heathen. As in the former instance many of the deluded people were slain. The Egyptian himself escaped, but did not appear again.[2]

In accordance with what we read in Matt. xxiv., the historian tells us there were many such deceivers before and during the Jewish war, some of them representing themselves to be only forerunners, but others claiming for themselves the Messianic dignity. He dwells, on the one hand, on the lamentable credulity with which they gave heed to every deceiver who promised deliverance, and, on the other hand, on their not less lamentable blindness to all the signs and prophecies that foretold their inevitable ruin. When speaking of the latter, he tells us what sounds very strange.

[1] *Antt.* Bk. xx. ch. v.

[2] *Antt.* Bk. xx. ch. viii. 6.

"There was one Jesus," he says, "the son of Ananus, a plebeian and a husbandman, who, for four years before the war began, cried out at the Feast of Tabernacles: 'A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and the holy house, a voice against the bridegrooms and the brides, a voice against the whole people.'" He was often beaten. Once before the procurator he was scourged till his bones were laid bare. He shed no tears, but at every stroke his answer was still the same, "Wo to Jerusalem." Thus he continued to cry in the doomed city for seven years and five months, and then at last upon the wall, exclaiming, "Wo to the city again, and to the people, and to the holy house," he added, "and to me also," when a stone from one of the driving engines smote and killed him. Had Josephus been a Christian, the very name of this man would have recalled the sorrowful words and the tears of an infinitely greater, but almost in the breath in which he tells us of the persistent cry he uses language most unworthy of a Jew. What chiefly influenced his countrymen, he informs us, in undertaking the war, was an ambiguous oracle which was also found in their sacred writings, how, about that time, one from their country should become governor of the habitable earth. Josephus could interpret Scripture to please his masters. "The oracle," he explains, "certainly denoted the government of Vespasian, who was appointed emperor in Judæa."[1]

This leads us to notice the position which in recent times some who deny the supernatural in New Testament history have strenuously defended. The existence and profound influence of the Messianic hope, they contend, naturally led Jesus, when his self-consciousness was fully developed, to claim the Messianic title.

Numerous prophecies, and the history of many centuries, had educated the people to the faith in a great deliverer who should break every yoke. One had the choice, then, either to give up, as some did, the dearest convictions of the nation, or, as most did, boldly to hope that the long-cherished ideal would soon be realised. Everyone who entertained this hope, and who, at the same time, was conscious of high gifts which

[1] *Wars*, Bk. vi. chap. v. 4.

qualified him to become a saviour to the people, most inevitably put to himself the question, "Art thou he that should come?" and he might most sincerely believe that he was, and that no other was to be looked for.

Now, this kind of reasoning may dispose us to admit that the false prophets, or some of the false prophets, who claimed the title, began by deceiving themselves. But some of those who apply this reasoning to the true Messiah themselves declare that the great doctrine of Judas of Galilee and of the Pharisees who followed him was the doctrine of the knife, and no one will deny that, whether we take our examples from the time preceding or from the time subsequent to the appearing of Christ down to Barcochba, the "Son of the Star," all of them held fast the same doctrine, and hoped, by violence and bloodshed, to establish the truth of their claims, and to win the diadem of glory which the desire of all nations was to wear. The false Messiahs were all cast pretty much in the same mould; and how unlike they were to the true! Had He been, like them, the mere creation of His time, or even had He united with His claims wisdom and gentleness and sound moral instincts, such as Rabbi Hillel possessed, He could not have purged the Messianic hope so perfectly as He did purge it from all base admixture, and far less could He have fulfilled it. He could not on that mountain have said at the beginning of His ministry: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God." He could not on that other mount at the end of His ministry, when He was lifted up, have drawn to Himself the dying thief as an earnest of the power by which He should draw all men, and cheered his heart with the hope of heavenly glory. These false Messiahs, then, who were springing up anew, and ever finding multitudes of followers, bear witness irresistibly to the prevalence and power of the great hope; but, as they pale their ineffectual fires, are we not constrained to fall down before the adorable splendour of the Sun of Righteousness? We see the amazing difference now. But that Jesus of Nazareth, so unlike others who claimed the title, was indeed the Messiah, the Son of God—this, in the days of His flesh, was a conviction that was wrought by the

Heavenly Father Himself, and was matured as the fruit of year-long intercourse.

In looking back over the ground we have traversed, we may surely say with the apostle that the "fulness of the times" was come. Not only was the period of seventy weeks (490 years) predicted by Daniel completed; not only had the sceptre departed from Judah, as prophesied by the dying patriarch, but both the need and the expectation of the promised Deliverer had reached their highest point, and, at the same time, remarkable preparation had been made in Providence for the diffusion of the truth. It has been said that "Judaism prepared salvation for mankind, and heathenism prepared mankind for salvation." This is one of those pointed, portable sentences that must not be stretched too far, but in which is contained a great amount of truth. Salvation is of the Jews, and the very hollowness and insufficiency of mythological systems, which had been made manifest in the light of advancing culture, might well create the disposition to listen to a revelation that brought truth and rest. The better systems of philosophy, moreover, that had flourished in the heathen world, imperfect and defective as they were, offered certain points of contact for the new religion. Again, the union of so many nations under the one sceptre of the Roman emperor obviously presented facilities for the diffusion of Christianity. The father of Church History, indeed, assigns this as the reason why Rome, under Providence, achieved such vast conquests: that it might be easier for the apostles to fulfil the last great commission of their Master, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." At the same time the Greek language was so generally known that Paul could write in it not only to the believers of Corinth and Philippi, but to those of Ephesus and Colosse and of Rome itself. Add to all this that, when the Prince of Peace appeared, Augustus had closed the temple of Janus after a succession of wars which had lasted, with two brief interruptions, through seven hundred years. All these things coexisted when, to take the often quoted phrase of the celebrated moralist, "the world could endure neither its guilt nor any remedy conceivable by man." All were concluded in unbelief or disobedience,

but God had prepared the way for showing mercy to all—not to the Jews only but also to the Gentiles. It is in contemplating great evolutions in history that the apostle exclaims: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!"

CHAPTER VI.

THE BEGINNING OF THE CHRISTIAN ERA.

On the history of Christ Himself, the Founder and the Foundation of the Church, I do not mean to enter. It would be impossible to treat of it in a profitable manner without devoting to it more time than we can afford to spare from ecclesiastical history in the restricted sense. Let us remember, however, not only that He is the central theme of the gospels, but that, even as the very word "Church" should perpetually remind us that He is Lord, every page of its history, if we read it aright, testifies of Him, either showing more or less perfectly the one image of God that came down from heaven, or presenting Him afresh as rejected, denied, betrayed, and crucified. We must ever recognise the presence and the power of Him by whose name we call ourselves and our era, as well as the spiritual kingdom to which we belong.

I say the name by which we call ourselves and *our era*. Even to the present day, however, the date at which He was born, who is justly said to have moved the history of the world from its hinges,—with whom the history of the old ends and the history of the new begins,—has not been determined with certainty. The year from which we actually reckon, and which was fixed for us by the Roman abbot Dionysius the Little (Exiguus) about the middle of the sixth century, appears now to be abandoned by both Catholic and Protestant writers. Some of the latest inquiries have led to a decision in favour of 747 or 748 from the foundation of Rome. There is no difficulty in showing that it could not be later than 750, for we have the positive statement of the Jewish historian, which there is no reason to question, that King Herod the Great died in that year; and we know from Matthew that that monarch was alive when Christ was born, and for a time, left altogether indefinite, subsequent to that event. Another datum is furnished by Luke, who states that the

public appearing of John the Baptist took place in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar. It cannot be said that this datum of itself would lead to a satisfactory conclusion, but it goes some way to confirm the result reached from the former. If we include in the reckoning the two years during which Tiberius reigned along with Augustus, and thus fix the beginning of his reign at the year 765 A.U.C., then we have, by adding fifteen, the year 780 as that in which John's manifestation to Israel took place. Now we know that Jesus began His public ministry soon after John's appearing, and that He was then about thirty years of age. Subtract the thirty from 780 and again we have 750 as the year of the birth. In confirmation of this particular date it has been stated as a result of calculation that for a long time the Passover fell upon a Thursday only in the year 783, and Christ, as is commonly accepted, celebrated the last Passover, at which the Supper was instituted, in the thirty-third year of His age.[1] Taking then thirty-three from 783 we have again the figure 750. It must be admitted, however, that the datum furnished by Luke when speaking of the imperial census in Palestine at the time of Quirinius, the Governor of Syria, would lead to a somewhat later date. It would appear from what has been stated, that while we have the negative certainty that Christ was not born in the year from which we are accustomed to reckon, we have nothing more than probabilities, more or less strong, as to the actual year that should be substituted. The difficulty of fixing the exact month and the exact day is still greater—so great that the attempt is now almost universally abandoned. A recent Roman Catholic writer expresses his astonishment at the confidence with which some authors belonging to his own Church arrive, by the boldest combinations, at the conclusion that Jesus was born precisely on the 25th of December, while the great father, St. Jerome, in discoursing on the Nativity says: "Sive hodie Christus natus est, sive baptisatus est, diversa quidem fertur opinio in mundo et pro traditionum varietate sententia est diversa"—Opinions and traditions were equally various on the points.

[1] The surprising opinion of so early a father as Irenæus, that Jesus was over forty years of age when He died, remained quite isolated.

CHAPTER VII.

PETER.

On the cupola of St. Peter's in Rome there stand in great, golden letters, which can be distinctly read from the depth below, these words: "Tu es Petrus et super hanc petram ædificabo ecclesiam meam et tibi dabo claves regni coelorum." As for the keys, the emblem of authority in the new kingdom, it may be contended truly enough that the same power was subsequently conferred on all the apostles: "Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven;" but that Peter should be singled out first and individually for investiture with this spiritual power, does, it ought in fairness to be admitted, indicate a certain pre-eminence to which it was the Lord's will to exalt him, as plainly as the circumstance on which, naturally, great stress has been laid, that, though he was not the first converted, he is invariably named first in the catalogues of the Twelve which we have in the gospels.

Again, as to the first part of the golden sentence which adorns that vast cathedral—"Tu es Petrus et super hanc petram ædificabo ecclesiam meam"—it may be argued that not only many modern interpreters but many of the ancient fathers, having regard to the solemn declaration that Christ Himself is the one foundation, than which no other can be laid, have understood the Lord to be speaking of Himself as the rock on which the Church was to be built, or—what is substantially equivalent—of His disciple's confession of faith in Him as the Son of the living God. There was no propriety, it may be urged, in calling any of the Twelve the rock on which the Church should be built—surely none in applying it to him who was characterised by that rashness in word and deed with which immovable firmness of character cannot

possibly coexist; to that mixture of strength and weakness, of courageous faith and desponding unbelief; to the man who drew upon himself the rebuke, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men"; the man who not only denied his Lord when it could be said that the Spirit was not yet given, but who, after he had not only received the Holy Spirit in the fulness of His influences, but had imparted heavenly gifts to many, was overcome by his fear of Jewish zealots at Antioch, and practically denied, and was rebuked to his face for denying, the great principle for which Paul was ready to give his life, and which, in truth, was necessary to make the religion of Christ the religion of the world.

But, on the other hand, it must be considered that the fuller revelation of Peter's faults and sins arises in some measure from this pre-eminence above his brethren, and from impulses that were not ungenerous, though they needed to be purified and directed. But this also is to be considered—that the Lord, who knoweth the end from the beginning, and calleth the things that are not as though they were, no sooner saw this man coming to Him as a disciple than He said, "Thou art Simon the son of Jonas; thou shalt be called Cephas, which is, by interpretation, a stone." This man might, like other men, and more than some men, be as "a reed shaken with the wind," but the Lord could glorify His power in him, and, remaining Himself the chief Corner-stone, could assign him the chief place in the foundation of apostles and prophets. Accordingly, many Protestant writers, believing this to be not only possible, but to have been verified by fact, have no difficulty in concurring, so far as Peter personally is concerned, with the Roman Catholic interpretation of the great words, "Upon this rock will I build my Church." In the bright cloud of Christian witnesses that spans the firmament of the Church's history, and which reaches even to us, whether we see the first glorious speck arise on Mount Zion when the day of Pentecost was come, or on the slope of Hermon when the great truth which had not been learned from flesh and blood was confessed, we discern the Apostle Peter at the end nearest the Lord, who is made higher than

the heavens; and if we look even at the cloud of Gentile witnesses, we see indeed one who shines with stronger and purer lustre, but still the cloud arises by the distant shore of the Great Sea, over the house where Peter prayed. Among the living stones—to return to the figure of the name—which are built up a spiritual house for the offering of spiritual sacrifices, his place is unique. It is the noblest and highest position in the building, next that of Him who honours His servants, but will not give His own honour to another, who says, "Upon this rock will I build my Church," and concerning whom Peter himself quotes the ancient prophecy: "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious; and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded."

Here, then, is the grand fact that fulfils the great words standing over St Peter's. They might stand over any Church, though we should possibly prefer a text in which the whole cloud of witnesses vanishes and Jesus is found alone. It was not that he was the first to propose that the place which became vacant by the apostasy and self-murder of Judas should be filled up; or because he was the first to unfold that power of working miracles which the Redeemer, ere He departed, had conferred on His chosen followers; or because he was the first to give to the rulers a reason for the hope that was in him; or because he was the first to give expression to the glorious moral necessity under which devout conviction lays a man—"we must obey God rather than men"; or because he was the first to execute, or, at all events, to pronounce judgment on the miserable man and woman who by hypocrisy and lying defiled the Church in the days of her virgin purity—it is not so much in these things that we see the fulfilment of the great promise as in the fact that he preached the first sermon testifying of a crucified and risen Saviour, by which three thousand souls were converted, and in the additional fact that to him first was revealed the full significance of the Master's word, "The field is the world," and that he was the first labourer who broke a way through the thorny hedge of Judaism, and, putting in his sickle, reaped the first-fruits of the white and plentiful harvest that lay beyond. In truth, were it not that the name is justly reserved for another and an infinitely

greater, we might call Peter the founder of the Christian Church in much the same sense as others have been designated founders of particular sections comprehended in the one great name. The fact is incontestable that Christ employed Peter, as He employed no other of the disciples, in founding His Church; and, this constituting the peculiar glory which the Lord was pleased to confer upon him, it is manifest not only that a satisfactory sense is thus given to the vast promise made at Cæsarea Philippi, but that in this respect, from the nature of the thing, he could not possibly have a successor. And it is noteworthy that while, in the earliest days of the Church, Peter appears ever in the foreground, no sooner is the foundation laid both among Jews and Gentiles than he begins gradually to recede. After the famous so-called Council of which we have an account in Acts xv., in which he neither presides nor claims any authority above his brethren, he altogether disappears from the page of sacred history. Labours and suffering still awaited him in common with other witnesses of the risen Saviour, until the day he should put off his tabernacle, but it is as if his special life-task were now accomplished; and, in point of fact, the Lord glorified Himself henceforth more signally by another chosen to carry on and extend the work which He had begun by Peter. Let us, then, recognise this Apostle as surrounded with the peculiar lustre which the Lord put upon him; but we are not derogating from him—we are but acting in accordance with the teaching of his own Epistles—when we refuse to ascribe to him titles of pre-eminence that do not proceed from the same Divine fountain. It assuredly does not follow from his being chosen as the rock on which the Church should be built, that he was at the same time set over it as the visible representative of its invisible Head. Peter never dreamed that his brethren would fall down before him: he never acted as lord over God's heritage. If he ever had the dream, it was when others had it as well as himself, and when none of them had it from God. Jesus "took a little child and set him in the midst of them, and when He had taken him in His arms, He said unto them: Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name receiveth me; and whosoever receiveth me, receiveth not me, but Him that sent me." The lesson was

subsequent to the promise, but the dispute which had arisen among the disciples by the way was not settled by recalling the promise and more especially assigning to Peter the pre-eminence which it is thought by Roman Catholics necessarily to involve. But, it may be argued, the time was not yet come for formally and explicitly investing him with that supremacy, and the wisdom and love shown in deferring it were all the greater that the heart of the chosen disciple, like that of the others, was at that moment fired with worldly ambition, and unprepared for the high spiritual honour which was to be conferred on him after he had passed through a deep valley of humiliation and sorrow. It came after his Master's resurrection, when he was invested with authority over both the sheep and the lambs—over the clergy and the laity, says one class of Roman Catholic writers; over the old and young, say others more naturally; both classes, however, agreeing that he was invested with authority over the whole Church. It is marvellous that such a sense can be put on the threefold command that corresponded with the threefold question, which recalled the threefold denial. To dwell on the question whether these words, "Feed my sheep," "Feed my lambs," can possibly mean so much, is unnecessary: but it is to be considered whether there be any historical trace of the supreme authority which they have been supposed to confer. Is there anything inconsistent with the view that the claim of supremacy was neither made nor conceded? When Peter and John go up together to the temple, or when they appear together before the Sanhedrim, or when they go down together to Samaria, there is nothing to indicate that one is a prince and the other a subject. They seem as brethren under the one Master, and as much on terms of perfect equality now as on that day when, on the Lake, the son of Jonas and the son of Zebedee were each in his own boat, and the one beckoned to the other that he should come and help him. But princes sometimes associate with their subjects as if they were equals. The King of kings once said to His followers, "I call you not servants, but friends." Such reasoning as this, however, is clearly inapplicable to one of the cases referred to—the joint mission to Samaria, which was undertaken with the view of confirming the new

converts.[1] In like manner, we read in the sixth chapter that the apostles together set apart the deacons who had been previously elected by the community. Reference has already been made to the deliberations of which an account is given in the fifteenth chapter, which could not have been carried on as they were if Peter had been the visible representative of the invisible Lord, and also to the just censure which the Apostle of the circumcision drew upon himself at Antioch. But in the chapter of Galatians in which Paul tells us how he withstood Peter to the face because he was to be blamed, there is another verse which to me appears quite decisive. Passing over the language of the seventh verse, which is likewise most unfavourable to the idea of Peter's primacy, we read at the ninth verse: "And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision."

The very arrangement of the names in this verse, to say nothing of the clause in which the three are characterised, would be inexplicable if we entertained the idea that Peter occupied a peculiar and pre-eminent position in the Church. In that other passage, "All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas," it might be said we have a climax, Paul in his humility beginning with himself and rising to the highest ambassador and representative of Christ on earth. But in the passage in Galatians we have neither climax nor anti-climax, and of course the supposition of either would be of no avail. The actual arrangement—"James, Cephas, and John"—is wholly irreconcilable with the Roman Catholic belief that Peter was invested with supreme authority by his Master and exercised it during his lifetime.

While then we leave Peter, as we ought most heartily to do, in possession of the special lustre with which the Saviour Himself surrounded his name, we have a right to deny the fundamental position on which the claim of papal supremacy is based, and it is not necessary for us to go further. But the defenders of the claim are obviously bound to go further and to establish a great deal more. And they have endeav-

[1] Acts viii.

oured to do so. They have set themselves to prove that Peter became Bishop of Rome, and, dying in that see, transmitted to his successor the authority with which he had been himself divinely invested.

Not a few Protestants are willing to admit—and certainly there is no danger to their Protestantism in the admission—that Peter spent his last earthly hours in the bosom of the Roman community, and here, at the heart of the world, under Nero, and about the same time as Paul was martyred, endured the death which his Lord had predicted as for him the gateway into the heavenly city. The legend that, at his own request, to which he was prompted by his deep humility, he was crucified with his head downward, is not older than Origen. Some have argued that there is something like internal evidence in favour of this story; it is so beautifully in keeping with the fervent temperament of the disciple who had fallen, but had been the humblest and most devoted of men since he was restored. There may, however, arise a doubt whether the humility which evinced itself so remarkably be not of a somewhat morbid and artificial character, and unlike the holy simplicity of the Apostolic age. An older legend tells us that, before his own departure, Peter's wife was led to death, and that the Apostle, calling her by name, said to her in an encouraging and consoling voice, "Remember the Lord." A later legend, for which St. Ambrose is the authority, tells us that, when the persecution broke out, the Christians, anxious to preserve the Apostle's life, persuaded him to flee. But at the gate he met our Lord. "*Domine quo vadis?*—Lord, whither goest Thou?" asked the Apostle. "I go to Rome," was the answer, "there to be crucified once more." Peter well understood the meaning of these words, and returned alone and was crucified.

The Roman tradition that Peter was twenty-five years bishop of the capital, and at the end of that period suffered martyrdom along with Paul, would not, if it were true, establish the claim of papal supremacy. But this tradition, which cannot be traced further back than the end of the fourth century (Jerome's revision of Eusebius), is not only unsupported by satisfactory historic evidence, as may be said of the legends given above, and even of the position that

Peter was ever at Rome at all; but, with the Scripture data we have in our hands, it is so incredible that some Roman Catholic writers have themselves abandoned it and reduced the twenty-five to one. To say nothing of the total silence of the Acts of the Apostles, and especially of its last chapter, the letter to the Romans, which was written in 58 A.D., and which ends with an unusually long catalogue of persons to whom salutations were sent, makes no mention of Peter, and we seek in vain even the slightest allusion to him. The letters written by Paul during his imprisonment likewise observe a silence that would be simply unintelligible on the hypothesis of Peter's having been twenty-five years bishop of the capital. The truth is that we know nothing with certainty of Peter but what we learn from the New Testament itself. Clement of Rome speaks (at the end of the first century) of the Apostle's martyrdom, but without clearly indicating the place; so that we learn from him merely that the prediction recorded in John was fulfilled. All else is post-apostolic, and the growth and transmission of the legend are naturally accounted for by the desire to find a basis at once historical and spiritual for the prodigious pretensions of the Roman See. The deepest foundation of the Roman power does not lie, however, in the fiction, although the fiction may be useful in maintaining it. It lies in the fact that the spirit of the old capital, from which the nations had been wont to receive laws, seized its bishops. When the rank of honour next to that of the Bishop of Rome was claimed for the Patriarch of Constantinople by the Second Ecumenical Council, the reason assigned was simply that his see was the new Rome. If the shadow of Peter hovers round the building which is adorned with the golden sentence, it is of Peter as he was in the hours which were not his best, but as he was when he said, "We have followed Thee, what shall we have therefore?" when he drew the sword to fight for the Kingdom which is not of this world; and when, we may even add, he denied the Lord that bought him.

CHAPTER VIII.

JOHN.

As we learn from the fourth gospel, there was an unnamed disciple who, in the company of Andrew, Peter's brother, stood by the Baptist in the valley of the Jordan when he uttered his great declaration concerning Jesus of Nazareth, whom he saw approaching: "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." It is almost universally believed that this disciple was John himself, who describes the ever-memorable scene and records the ever-memorable words. He could never forget the hour when first he saw Him to whom his heart clung with supreme devotion, whom he afterwards beheld on the Mount of Transfiguration, on the Mount of Olives nigh unto Bethany, and from the island of Patmos—transfigured, ascending, enthroned—but who then walked in obscurity, and was still in the background of history when designated as the Saviour round whom all history turns. Of the twelve who were chosen to be apostles, John is commonly supposed to have been the youngest. The belief is based on tradition, and it must be admitted that the date assigned for his decease tends somewhat to confirm it. It is generally thought, indeed, that all who composed the little company were young men when they were called to the apostleship; and certainly, to say nothing of the great receptivity of early years for new doctrine, youthful vigour was needed for the arduous and trying mission to which they were set apart. But among the young and fresh John is represented both by history and by art as the youngest and freshest of all; and this circumstance in part, though only in part, may have suggested the striking remark of Godet: "The well-beloved disciple personifies the eternal youth and unmarred virginity of the spouse of Christ."

It is hardly necessary to say that the relation in which he stood to the Lord was singularly close. Some have even imagined that this disciple and his Master were connected by the tie of blood; but, even if they had been, that would not account for the relation of which we actually know. John stood nearer Christ than any of the Lord's brethren according to the flesh. Not only was he one of "the chosen from the chosen," as they have been designated,—of the three who were witnesses of the resurrection of the daughter of Jairus, of the scene of glory on the mount of transfiguration, and of the agony in the garden,—but he appears as the object of a special personal affection, which has led to the supposition that, from the first, there was in him (and if there was, we know to what source he would trace it) a special depth of devotion which had no parallel, unless it was in Mary, the sister of Lazarus, and which was peculiarly attractive to Him on whose bosom he leaned, and out of whose fulness he received. At all events, he is designated as "the disciple whom Jesus loved;" and to him Jesus, speaking from the cross, bequeathed the legacy of the heart. If there was conferred on Peter a distinction all his own, there are natures to whom the words "Behold thy mother!" spoken at that hour, would sound as high and blissful as the words uttered at Cæsarea Philippi.

Though Peter is usually described as the man of action, and John as the man of contemplation and deep fervid feeling, we are not to suppose that the nature of the one was unemotional, or that of the other inactive. In the beginning of the Church's history John appears not only as Peter's friend and counsellor but as his fellow-labourer. But after the return from the mission to Samaria, on which they had been sent together for the confirmation of the new converts and for the communication of spiritual gifts, the younger son of Zebedee is not again mentioned in the sacred narrative. We learn, however, from Paul (Gal. ii.) that, when he came up to Jerusalem to confer with the twelve and the mother-church on his special vocation as apostle of the Gentiles, John was then present in the holy city, and he and Peter and James (the Lord's brother) are described as those who seemed to be, that is were recognised as, pillars of the

Church. To take the date commonly accepted for this visit of Paul's, which is also the date of the Council of which we read in Acts xv., John was still in Jerusalem in the year 53 A.D., nine years after his brother James had suffered martyrdom in fulfilment of the Lord's word that he should drink of His cup and be baptised with His baptism. Up to 53, then, John does not appear to have undertaken any foreign apostolic mission. The great epoch in his life—the date at which he left Jerusalem for the last time—is uncertain. Whether it preceded the time of Paul's last visit to Jerusalem, when he found James at the head of the Church there, or occurred somewhat later, and about the time of the Jewish war, we have no means of determining. After he left Jerusalem, Ephesus, according to ancient and unanimous accounts, became the centre of his apostolic labours, which were not confined to that city, but extended far and wide over the surrounding regions. This statement will be the more readily accepted if we remember the names of the six churches mentioned along with Ephesus in the Apocalypse—Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. We may suppose that John did not place himself at the head of the apostolic mission to that vast eastern field till after the death of Paul, who, in the period of his imprisonment at Rome, continued to charge himself with the care of the churches of Asia Minor, of which Ephesus was the parent community, addressed to them epistles, or sent to them messengers out of the circle of those who had been most closely associated with him in his work. According to Irenæus of Lyons (Lugdunum), who was a native of Asia Minor, and in his youth had seen and heard Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, one of John's disciples, the apostle lived and laboured long in Ephesus and its neighbourhood, and died in the time of the Emperor Trajan—that is, not before 98 A.D., which is the year of Trajan's accession.

That John was banished to the island Patmos, and there wrote the Apocalypse, rests on higher authority than that of tradition; but whether the banishment followed or preceded his first coming to Ephesus, whether it took place in the reign of Domitian (81–96 A.D.), or of an earlier Roman emperor, is a question for the settlement of which there are

no clear historical data. The legend that, in the time of Domitian, he was cast at Rome into a vessel of burning oil and came forth unharmed, is generally rejected.

But to return to John's long residence in Ephesus, which we are entitled to accept as historical, and which has never been disputed till the most recent times, we may see reason for adoring the wise providence of God in bringing into the regions where dangerous sects were chiefly spreading, that Apostle who, in the unveiling of Divine things, evinces a peculiar depth of spirit and a peculiar fervour and purity of feeling. That John, with his apostolic authority and his sanctified zeal, contended there for the true humanity and the supreme Divinity of his Lord, was for the Church of those days and of all succeeding ages an inestimable blessing. The most touching of all the scenes presented in the first book of Church History is that in which we behold Paul at Miletus surrounded with the elders of the Church of Ephesus. We hear him speak of the cloud which is over his own future, and of the darker cloud which is over theirs (Acts xx.) We read that, after he had spoken, they all wept sore, and fell on his neck and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that "they should see his face no more." All is sadness in that parting except this: we read that, before they wept, he kneeled down and prayed with them all. We know not what they asked, but shall we hesitate to say that the Lord did unto them exceedingly abundantly above what they asked or thought? If we are entitled to see, as has been seen from the days of old, a connection between Stephen's prayer and Paul's conversion, what shall hinder us from connecting the prayer of that sorrowful hour with John's blissful mission to the East? This we do know, that the men of Ephesus who were then sowing in tears, sorrowing because they should see Paul's face no more, would reap in joy when they beheld the face of him who had lain on the bosom of Jesus, and had taken the mother of Jesus to his own home. When the wolf came there was none who would care more for the sheep; there was none who united in a higher degree the wisdom of the serpent with the purity of the dove.

Most deeply interested are we in that mission to the East,

for there John taught not only orally but by his writing, and, in particular, by his "spiritual gospel" (*εὐαγγέλιον πνευματικόν*), as it was called first by Clement of Alexandria, which penetrated more deeply into the innermost life and spirit of the Lord than the other three gospels, and, for the same reason, termed also, by a German theologian, the "pectus Christi." While this gospel supplements the Synoptics (it is, however, a most inadequate way of speaking when we represent it as a mere supplement), and while it is the most exalted model of devout contemplation we possess, there can be no doubt that much of the historical matter that is added, and many aspects in which the Redeemer's person and work are contemplated, were specially fitted to meet pernicious forms of error which had begun to prevail, as in the first epistle heretical teachers are not mentioned by name, but the tenets which they notoriously held are rejected by the exhibition, in sharp and unmistakable contrast, of the truths which they denied. Of this the prologue furnishes ample and striking illustration. I do not mean now to enter upon particulars with regard to any sects or their founders, but merely mention that in the introduction there are great truths emphatically stated that were already denied, and the presumption is that they were stated because they were denied. The Logos is the Creator of all things, not, as some taught, subordinate, or of an inferior nature, to the supreme God, but from eternity with Him, and from eternity God. The Logos had not descended, as some taught, upon Jesus at His baptism, but the Logos Himself became man. And He became truly man (*ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο*); He did not wear the mere semblance of humanity, as some supposed. Notwithstanding the Baptist's own repudiation of the title of Messiah, and his most humble protest against it, there were those who ascribed it to him (these, however, are disciples who are not to be confounded with those mentioned in Acts xix.): "He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light." Notwithstanding the decision of which we read in Acts xv., in which all appear to have acquiesced at the time, there had arisen before John wrote a heretical opposition, holding the old doctrine of the necessity of circumcision, against which Paul had contended so long and warmly. It is most probable that

these heretics were before the mind of John when he wrote: "To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them which believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." How distinctly in these words does he teach the same doctrine as the great apostle who had founded the Church in Ephesus!

The history of the period which John spent in that city has been embellished with a considerable number of legends; and certainly it is quite a possible thing that some of them, though they may not be supported by sufficient evidence, may rest on a foundation of truth. One of the best known stands in immediate connection with the point we have just been considering, and if it is not literally true, it may have been conceived as a reflection from actual life of the terrible sentences which the beloved disciple, who was also one of the sons of thunder, utters against the enemies of that truth. It is related[1] that, having met the arch-heretic Cerinthus in one of the public baths, he immediately left it, declaring his fear that the building would fall and crush them. In contrast with this, as showing the other side of John's nature, another tradition tells how the aged disciple found pleasure in the playfulnesss and fondness of a favourite bird, and defended himself against the charge of unworthy trifling by the familiar comparison of the bow which must sometimes be unbent. You all know that other tradition,[2] which is not only more frequently told, but worthy of being told, that brings before us the last scene of his public life, when, weak and dying, unable even to stand, he was borne into the midst of the assembly, and there continued to repeat only the one sentence, "Little children, love one another," till, being asked why he thus repeated the words, he replied: "It is the Lord's command, which sums up all His will." It is the Lord's command, and some one has called it "John's Testament." By him, certainly, above all the apostles,—by the disciple whom Jesus loved, and to whom He bequeathed the legacy of the heart,—the Lord's command has been transmitted to the generations following. There is a beautiful narrative proceeding from a more ancient source (Clement of Alexandria), and

[1] Irenæus and Eusebius. [2] Given by Jerome.

illustrative of the love of the true shepherd, who goes after the wanderer and brings him back to the fold. On one of his apostolic journeys John beheld in Smyrna a youth whose bearing struck him, and for whom he conceived a great affection. He committed him to the special care of the bishop and continued his journey. After some years he returned to Smyrna, and his first question was for the youth. "He is dead," was the reply; and, on further inquiry, it was explained that he was dead to God. He had forsaken the way of life, and had become the captain of a band of robbers. Immediately John demanded a horse, and he rested not till he had discovered the robbers' retreat. He was made prisoner. "Lead me to your captain," he said to those who took him. They complied, but when the captain beheld him he began to flee, and John, forgetting his age, pursued, exclaiming: "Why flee from me, my son? Have pity upon me. As the Lord hath laid down His life for us, willingly would I lay down my life for thee. Oh, stand, for Christ hath sent me to thee!" The youth was overcome. He threw aside his wild garb and was restored to the bosom of the Church.

As to the time of John's death, we know that it was at the end of the first century, or toward the beginning of the second. As to the manner of it, we know nothing. That the fact was early questioned, and continues to be questioned, is obviously traceable to the misunderstanding of the words of Jesus noticed in the last chapter of John's gospel itself (John xxi.). After his departure, some really believed that he had been translated, like Enoch and Elijah; others supposed that he was preserved alive somewhere on earth, and would reappear at the coming of the personal Antichrist. Among those who believed that he was actually dead there grew up a legend (mentioned by Augustine) that, when he felt his end approaching, he gave orders for the construction of his own sepulchre, and then laid himself down, as on a bed, to die, but that afterwards there were strange movements in the earth that covered him. This legend seems to have been afterwards expanded in various ways. The addition was made that the grave was opened and found empty, which would suit either the hypothesis of a resurrection or that of a merely seeming death. But the legendary cycle is not com-

plete, and it is not necessary to complete it. No such wreath is needed for the head of him who is called the Theologian, the Eagle.[1] The imperishable crown which he wears in the church we see in his writings. It is a crown which the wearer would doubtless cast at his Lord's feet, yet meet for the head of him who lay on the Lord's breast. As Mr. Plumptre has said of those apocryphal materials, "We strain our sight in vain to distinguish between the false and the true, between the shadows with which the gloom is peopled and the living forms of whom we are in search. We find it better and more satisfactory to turn again, for all our conceptions of the Apostle's mind and character, to the scanty records of the New Testament and the writings which he himself has left. Nowhere is the vision of the Eternal Word, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, so unclouded; nowhere are there such distinctive personal reminiscences of the Christ in His most distinctively human characteristics."

[1] "Volat avis sine meta" is the motto of Olshausen's commentary. It is taken from a hymn of Adam of St. Victor.

CHAPTER IX.

THE OTHER DISCIPLES.

NOTHING is known with certainty of the apostles but what we learn from the New Testament itself. At the end of the period to which the sacred record brings us the world may be said to have been already filled with the light of the gospel, but the living torches which had been kindled by Jesus Himself, and by which the light had been borne from land to land, vanish from our view. But in addition to those concerning Peter and John, some traditions with regard to the other disciples may be mentioned in a word. Of Matthew the publican it is said that, having first preached among the Jews, he afterwards went on a mission to the tribes of Ethiopia. Of Bartholomew, who is commonly identified with Nathanael, so well known to us from the first chapter of John's gospel, the legend, in which, of course, he appears as a different person from the guileless Israelite, says that he was of royal descent, the son of a king named Ptolemy, and that, even when a disciple of the Lord, he wore his purple robe. The Saviour, it is further said, once prophesied to him that he should put off the purple robe of his body, and the prediction was fulfilled when, in Armenia, to which he had gone to preach the gospel, he was killed by being flayed alive. The legend, however, varies as to the region in which he taught and suffered. To Thomas a sphere of labour has been assigned in India; to Thaddæus, in Rome; to Simon the Canaanite, in Africa. Philip of Bethsaida, who is not to be confounded with the deacon Philip, by whom the Ethiopian eunuch was converted, is said to have preached the gospel in Phrygia, and to have died at Hierapolis at an advanced age, having survived all his fellow-apostles but John. As to the end of James, the brother of the Lord, to whom the Epistle

is commonly ascribed, the following account is given by Josephus (*Ant.* xx. 9. 1):—

"Ananus, the high priest, being of the sect of the Sadducees, who are very rigid in judging offenders above all the rest of Jews, . . . assembled the Sanhedrim of the Judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others. And when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned."

For this procedure, however, of which people generally disapproved, Ananus, as Josephus further states, was removed from office three months afterwards. The account given in Eusebius[1] from Hegesippus, who lived in the time of the Antonines, differs greatly from that of the Jewish authors. It is often quoted, and is certainly very interesting, and by many it is accepted as historical. James, according to Hegesippus, used to go alone into the temple, and there he was commonly found upon his knees praying for forgiveness for the people, so that his knees grew dry and hard like a camel's from his constantly bending them in prayer. On account of his exceeding righteousness he was called the Just, and Oblias, which means "the bulwark of the people." The scribes and Pharisees set him on the gable of the temple, requiring him to address the multitude and persuade them not to go astray after Jesus. But James testified powerfully of the Lord, and many exclaimed, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" The enemies of the truth had him thrown down, and, as he was not killed by the fall, they began to stone him. On the knees which had been so often bent he cried, "I beseech thee, Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." And while they were stoning him, one of the priests of the sons of Rechab cried out and said, "Stop! what are you doing? The just one is praying for you." Then a fuller took the club with which he pressed the clothes and brought it down on the head of the just one. "And so he bore his witness. And they buried him on the spot by the temple, and the column still remains by the temple." "And," the account continues, "immediately Vespasian commenced the siege."

[1] *Eccl. Hist.* ii. 23.

CHAPTER X.

PAUL.

It is not necessary to go further into the merely traditional. It is to be noted in general that from this source we learn that all the apostles suffered martyrdom except John, whose brother James had been the first of the apostles put to death for his religion. Still more remarkable is it that, where such widely separated fields of labour are assigned to so many different persons, we have not even the authority of tradition for supposing that, with the exception of Peter, any of the Twelve who were originally apostles came as heralds of the gospel into Europe. There is undoubtedly a tradition, though there is no clear historical evidence to support it, that Peter came to Corinth and to Rome; that he laboured at Rome for a longer or shorter period; and that at length by his martyrdom, in which he was "made equal to his Lord" by being crucified, yet "not made equal," being, at his own request, crucified with his head downward, his name was added to the roll of the illustrious examples (*τὰ γενναῖα ὑποδείγματα*) of those times. When we think what Europe, as compared with other continents, has become through the influence of Christian truth, and remember that the only apostle of whom we know with certainty that he laboured in this continent at all was he "that was born out of due time," perhaps there is not a more striking illustration in all history of the Lord's own declaration that the last shall be first; and we cannot exaggerate the importance of that turning-point in Luke's narrative at which the man of Macedonia appeared to Paul in a vision, saying, "Come over and help us." It is exceedingly little, indeed, that we learn of the Twelve in the Acts—comparatively little even of those who were reputed to be the pillars of the mother-church. More than half of the narrative is given to him who was called into the vineyard last, yet laboured more abundantly than they all. And with him the book ends. It

brings him into the world's capital. In Rome, it has been somewhere stated, the hut where Romulus had once dwelt was still pointed out in the time of the emperors. What a change had taken place in the eight hundred years which had elapsed from the day on which the furrow was drawn by the founder! In the time of Nero, little did the descendants of the old Romans imagine that there dwelt in a hired house in their city a man who, while he wore a chain, was chosen above all others to build up an empire unspeakably greater and more durable than that founded by the occupant of the ancient hut. A poor common monk long afterwards visited in obscurity the same city, and there received some part of the preparation needed for the accomplishment of the greatest revolution that has taken place since the introduction of Christianity. "Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no man forbidding him." With these words the New Testament narrative comes to a close. How did the two years end? Was it with his martyrdom? Or was he, as perhaps the greater number of writers believe, set free, and thus enabled for a while longer to labour for the Divine Kingdom in different regions, and, in particular, to accomplish that intended journey to Spain of which he speaks in the Epistle to the Romans? If the last question is to be answered in the affirmative, it becomes necessary to suppose further that he fell into a second captivity, which ended in his execution. These questions have been answered with the greatest confidence on both sides. It has been sometimes asserted that, though we have no definite information as to the subsequent history of the Apostle, the very silence of Luke leads inevitably to the conclusion that Paul did not suffer martyrdom at the end of the two years. Had he been put to death then, Luke would have brought the history to the natural termination by recording the fact. The conclusion, however, is not inevitable. Leaving out of view the consideration that the New Testament records few death scenes, and does not dwell on any except that of the Lord Himself, on which it does dwell with extraordinary fulness and minuteness of detail—Stephen's death-

scene being hardly an exception, since his sufferings are not dwelt upon—we may ask, "What do we know with certainty of the subsequent history of the historian any more than of the subsequent history of the subject of those closing chapters?" There is, indeed, a tradition that Luke reached a considerable age, but the tradition is not uniform, and, even if it were, it would settle nothing unless it could be traced to competent witnesses. Supposing that there was only one imprisonment, and that it ended in the apostle's martyrdom, there is little to prevent us from supposing further that the beloved physician, who alone was his companion when others had forsaken him, was his companion still in his last hours and in the suffering of death. No one, of course, is entitled to state this as a historical fact, or to do more than suggest it as quite a possible supposition. And that is sufficient to show that the conclusion drawn in favour of a release and a second imprisonment is by no means inevitable.

The main argument adduced to prove that Paul did not suffer for several years after the termination of the captivity spoken of by Luke is derived from the pastoral epistles, which are thought to involve journeys belonging to a later period than 64 A.D.; such, for example, as a journey to Crete, with apostolic labours there, as well as a second visit to Troas. Some, however,—though it must be confessed that their conclusion can be reached only by the exercise of ingenuity,—find room enough within the frame of the Acts of the Apostles, and therefore before 64, for all that is necessary to explain the Epistles to Titus and Timothy. A different class of critics—those who deny the genuineness of the pastoral epistles—naturally favour the opinion that there was no second imprisonment, and argue on that ground.

But it may be asked if there is no historical ground whatever for the opinion that Paul was liberated in 64 A.D. By some an argument has been based on the anticipation of the journey to Spain already alluded to. In 58 Paul wrote: "Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come unto you; for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company." Now, altogether apart from any particular theory of inspiration, one is reluctant to believe

that an anticipation so confidently expressed by the Apostle was disappointed. This, however, is not an argument that will have any weight with those whose point of view is purely historical. But we have that expression in a letter addressed by the Roman Bishop Clement (first century) to the Church of Corinth, where it is said of Paul that, in preaching the gospel, he had come even to the τέρμα τῆς δύσεως—"the limit (or boundary) of the west." Here is the language of the most ancient authority in the time immediately succeeding that of the apostles. But it has been variously interpreted. Some of the High Church party in the southern part of our island have supposed Clement to mean England, and have thus reached the conclusion that the origin of their Church is apostolic in the most strict and literal sense. Of course there was an old British Church in existence long before Augustine was sent from Rome to convert the Anglo-Saxon conquerors, and it is not impossible that it was founded in the first century by immigrants from Asia Minor. Another interpretation put upon the phrase more frequently, and by writers belonging to different sections of the universal Church, is "the limit of Paul's journey toward the west"; and by this limit is understood the same as that recorded by the Acts of the Apostles—Rome. The interpretation adopted, with the exceptions above mentioned, by those who hold that there was a second captivity, is that it denotes Spain. It must be admitted that this explanation of the words is both ancient—and that is something—and, what is more, perfectly natural. It would not readily occur to a bishop writing from Rome to call that city τέρμα τῆς δύσεως. Even if there had been no ancient legend about Hercules, Spain might with propriety be thus described, but the so-called "pillars" of that hero may well be supposed to have suggested the very form of the expression. After all, then, the theory, on which certainly the historical data admit of more easy explanation, though I do not argue from that, has some little positive evidence in its support, and there is no positive evidence of a historical kind against it. Since there is no evidence against, and some little for it, I should have no hesitation in adopting it rather than abandon a single position as to the writings of Paul that is gained by satisfactory proof.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CHRISTIANS, THE JEWS, AND THE ROMAN POWER—FROM TIBERIUS TO TITUS.

At the time to which we are brought by the last chapter of Acts, there were Christian communities in all the great centres of population, and in many of the towns and villages, throughout the Roman world. The outward condition of these communities depended a great deal on the changing character and mood of the emperors as well as of their servants and representatives in the provinces. In the first instance, the government concerned itself little with the professors of the new religion. For the Roman magistrate, the things which were chosen to bring to light the things that are, were as good as non-existent, and sometimes, as in the well-known instance of Gallio, there was little disposition to interfere for the purpose either of persecuting or of protecting. Wherever the Christians were regarded as a Jewish sect, their assemblies belonged to the *collegia licita*. But where contempt exists, it may with little provocation—with little cause, imaginary or real—pass into hatred.

Tiberius, in whose reign Christ suffered, did not persecute the followers of Christ; and there even arose the legend that he proposed to the Senate to receive Christ among the gods.

In the reign of Claudius (A.D. 53), Jews we know were banished from Rome as having been guilty of exciting a tumult, and it is not improbable that on that occasion Jews and Christians were confounded, although this is not clear from the words of Suetonius: "Judæos, impulsore Chresto, assidue tumultuantes, Roma expulit."

The first terrible persecution of which the Christians were the victims broke out in the year 64 A.D., under Nero. But even he had let them alone during the first years of his reign. No one in these years could foresee the wild, voluptuous, and

cruel career which he was afterwards to run. On that career, however, he was now running. It is noteworthy that the first great persecution to which the Christians were subjected was a mere incident, and did not arise directly from religious hatred. He had murdered his mother, his wife, and his half-brother; it is not wonderful that his teachers, Burrhus and the famous Seneca, met the same fate (65 A.D.). The moralist had written that the world could not endure its evil; but there is nowhere a depth of evil so low that there cannot be found a lower still. In 64 A.D. a fire raged in the capital. It was greater than any that had ever been known. The greater part of the city was destroyed. According to Gibbon, "The vigilance of the government appears not to have neglected any of the precautions which might alleviate the sense of so dreadful a calamity. The imperial gardens were thrown open to the distressed multitude, temporary buildings were erected for their accommodation, and a plentiful supply of corn and provisions was distributed at a very moderate price. The most generous policy seemed to have dictated the edicts which regulated the disposition of the streets and the construction of private houses; and, as it usually happens, in an age of prosperity, the conflagration of Rome, in the course of a few years, produced a new city, more regular and more beautiful than the former. But all the prudence and humanity affected by Nero on this occasion were insufficient to preserve him from the popular suspicion. . . . The voice of rumour accused the Emperor as the incendiary of his own capital."[1] The act with which he has been charged has been differently explained. One account was that he set fire to the city in order to feast his eyes with a spectacle that would realise to his mad fancy the burning of Troy, and that, while the flames were ascending, he declaimed from the *Iliad;* but this Gibbon characterises as one of the "incredible stories that are adapted to the genius of an enraged people." Another account, which cannot be characterised in the same way, is that he intended to erect on the scene of ruin and desolation new buildings, and especially a magnificent imperial palace. At all events, suspicion had fastened on him, and he might well apprehend fatal consequences if

[1] [*Decline and Fall*, chap. xvi.]

he could not succeed in averting it. He must roll it off on those who were accused of cherishing such a "hatred of the human race" (*odium generis humani*) as to be capable of the worst crimes. With this odium the Jews were commonly charged, but they had friends to intercede for them, particularly Poppæa, the emperor's mistress. The Christians, then—the Galileans—who lay under the same charge, offered themselves as welcome victims. Men whom an historian like Tacitus could describe as "hated because of their crimes" (*per flagitia invisos*), had been the victims of many a calumny before the dire accusation of having burned the city was brought against them; and, as they had been calumniated before, this new story did not seem incredible to the enraged people. "With this view," says Tacitus (*Ann.* xv. 38–44), "he inflicted the most exquisite torture on those men who, under the vulgar appellation of Christians, were already branded with the deserved infamy. They derived their name and origin from Christ, who in the reign of Tiberius had suffered death by the sentence of the procurator, Pontius Pilate. For a while this dire superstition was checked, but it again burst forth, and not only spread itself over Judæa, the first seat of this mischievous sect, but was even introduced into Rome, the common asylum which receives and protects whatever is impure, whatever is atrocious. The confessions of those who were seized discovered a great multitude of their accomplices, and they were all convicted, not so much for the crime of setting fire to the city as for their hatred of human kind. They died in torments, and their torments were embittered by insult and derision. Some were nailed on crosses; others sewn up in the skins of wild beasts and exposed to the fury of dogs; others again, smeared over with combustible materials, were used as torches to illuminate the darkness of the night. The gardens of Nero were destined for the melancholy spectacle, which was accompanied with a horse race, and honoured with the presence of the emperor, who mingled with the populace in the dress of a charioteer. The guilt of the Christians indeed deserved the most exemplary punishment, but the public abhorrence was changed into commiseration from the opinion that those unhappy victims were sacrificed not so

much to the public welfare as to the cruelty of a jealous tyrant." Tacitus does not state the number of the victims, nor can it be learned from any other source, but the account just read leaves the impression that it was considerable. There is no reason to believe that this fierce persecution, which seems to have lasted with some interruptions to the year 68 A.D., extended far beyond Rome and its environs. Some historians, however, quote the words of Orosius (*Hist.* vii. 7): Romæ Christianos suppliciis et morte affecit ac per omnes provincias pari persecutione excruciari imperavit."[1] If the command was given, it must have been given towards the end of his reign, and there is no evidence that it was carried into execution. It reminds us of Herod's command to gather the elders of Judæa in the hippodrome of Jericho.

Nero had his worshippers after his death, and those worshippers applied to him the prophecy which was known throughout the world of a mighty Ruler who should rise from the East. Among the people generally his memory was execrated, and among the Christians his image hovered in darkness for long years, as that of Herod had hovered among the Jews, and the horror of him was so great that they believed he would come again in the end of the days with Antichrist, or even as Antichrist.

Under Nero's three successors—Galba, Otho, and Vitellius—who rapidly followed one another, the Christians enjoyed rest. Under Vespasian, however, the Jewish war, which resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, broke out. In an ancient work of Lactantius,[2] the Christian Cicero, as he has been called, it is shown that for the most part the end of the persecutors was most miserable. The death of Herod Agrippa and the self-murder of Nero, not to go back to Herod the Great or even to Pilate, will at once offer themselves to your memory. But in whatever light the deaths of these men are to be regarded, there can be no question that the New Testament itself represents the destruction of the Holy City as a great Divine judgment inflicted on account of obstinate unbelief. Like most Divine judgments, however, it

[1] ["He visited the Christians at Rome with torments and death, and gave orders that they should suffer like tortures throughout all the provinces."]

[2] *De Mortibus Persecutorum.*

has manifestly an aspect of goodness as well as of severity—of goodness towards those who had not continued in unbelief, but had repented and been converted. Judaism, as a Divine arrangement preparatory to the introduction of Christianity, had fulfilled its world-historic mission. Decaying and waxing old, it was ready to vanish away. Jerusalem, with its Temple as the centre of Jewish worship, had now no longer its original significance; and moreover, its continued existence began to prove, and was likely to prove more and more, prejudicial to Christianity. As those of the chosen people that believed did not make haste to go out, but continued to observe many of the old rites, the breach between the Jewish and Gentile Christians, which had not been thoroughly and permanently healed by the decision recorded in Acts xv., threatened to become alarmingly wide. In point of fact, it did become, with the extreme Judaising party, irreparable. On the other hand, where, without a deep attachment to the Gospel in its simplicity, there was the strong desire to prevent alienation and separation, there was the danger of impurity and corruption from the admixture of elements that had not been designed for perpetuity. The destruction, therefore, predicted by the Saviour Himself when the temple rebuilt by Herod stood in all its magnificence and glory, was a most important event in its bearing on the future progress and prosperity of the Church of Christ.

The mystery of a universal religion, which had been hid from ages and generations but was made known in due time, chiefly by the apostle Paul, still remaining a mystery to the bulk of the Jewish nation, only rendered their particularism more odious, more passionate, and more intolerable. In the Church founded by the ignominiously rejected Jesus they saw a new obstruction to the fulfilment of their Messianic hopes. But vengeance on the Jewish nation had begun before the Jewish war broke out, particularly under the procurator Gessius Florus, who appears to have been as great a monster as his master in the capital. The whips of his predecessor Albinus were now changed to scorpions, and it is not wonderful that the Jews, numbers of whom had formerly risen with far less cause, were now maddened to revolt. While we may recognise the righteousness of God in the

final judgment, we are, of course, free to judge of the instruments by which His wrath came upon them to the uttermost. "Duravit patientia Judæis usque ad Gessium Florum procuratorem,"[1] says Tacitus, expressively enough, after his own manner. The *patientia* could not but become *furor*—"madness." Among other things it is related of Gessius Florus that, for a share of the plunder of a city, he granted impunity to the banditti who invested Judæa, and, what is vastly more revolting, that he deliberately excited a tumult and ordered a massacre at Jerusalem, in which 3600 perished, merely to afford him, amidst the confusion, an opportunity of plundering the temple. Again—and this, if not so shocking, was hardly less calculated to infuriate—when, at the feast of the Passover (A.D. 65), the Jews petitioned Gallus, the pro-consul of Syria, who was then in Jerusalem, against the tyranny of Florus, the latter stood laughing at the petitioners by the side of his superior, who showed no great disposition to redress their wrongs, and who further ostentatiously escorted Florus to Antioch. Josephus expressly says that Florus purposely kindled the rebellion in order to cover his crimes. It broke out in the twelfth year of the reign of Nero. The Jews, under the leadership of a certain Manahem, the son of Judas, took the fortress Antonia by storm and slew its Roman garrison. On the other hand, the Gentile inhabitants of Cæsarea fell upon the Jewish part of the population and murdered them by thousands. To revenge the death of their brethren in Cæsarea, and in other places where similar massacres took place, multitudes of Jews banded together, and invaded the Syrian territory, devastating several towns and slaying the inhabitants. Then the pro-consul, Cestius Gallus, advanced with a well-equipped army against the rebels, appeared before Jerusalem, and, after having made himself master of the northern part of the city, departed in the most unaccountable manner, when, according to the Jewish historian, he might have finished the war at once. As he was seriously harassed by the Jews on the way, his retreat became a flight and his forces were greatly diminished—a result which enraged Nero, led to the appointment of Vespasian, and, it would seem, proved fatal to Gallus himself, who died

[1] ["Patience lasted the Jews till the time of Gessius Florus."]

before the arrival of his successor, having sunk, it is supposed, under vexation and grief.

Once more the Jewish people were for a time free; but they had lost the power of self-government, and the sufferings caused by anarchy and fanaticism exceeded all that had been endured under the Romans. The whole land, and Galilee especially, was desolated by bands of robbers, the wildest and most shameless. Under leaders at once cunning and daring these gangs plundered towns and villages till they began to find this kind of work tame and tedious, and the chief robbers united their forces and entered Jerusalem itself, where they made themselves masters of the Temple and robbed and murdered on all sides.

The exact time at which the Christians, remembering the word of their Lord, fled beyond Jordan to Pella in Peræa, it is scarcely possible to ascertain, but it must have been between the date of the retreat of Gallus and the last period of the war, when the city was closely invested. Over the carcase from which the breath of a Divine life had fled, and in which no pulse beat for repentance and renewal, the eagles were now gathering, flying around it in circles becoming narrower and narrower; but meanwhile the Lord put His dove—His Church—in a safe retreat. The account of Eusebius is simply that the Christians, obeying the Divine warning, departed, and that after their departure, the vengeance of heaven burst forth over the godless city. Pella is described as a peaceful oasis, lying on the great road to Damascus, but hidden behind hills and surrounded with murmuring brooks and shady groves. It is not necessary to suppose, however, that the Christians, as soon as they knew that the abomination of desolation stood in the holy place, all fled on the same day or in the same season of the year. But if any of them fled on the Sabbath day, they had too much reason to fear that no hand would be stretched out to relieve them, no arm to help them; and specially, if they carried any burden with them, might they apprehend the most cruel treatment as breakers of the fourth commandment. If, again, they attempted to flee in the winter, or rainy season, what would they do in the swellings of the Jordan, which had to be crossed before the place prepared of God could be reached?

Josephus describes the fate of a multitude of Jewish fugitives (not Christians) in language that throws a fearful light on the words of the Lord, "Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter." A Roman officer with his horsemen followed them as far as Jordan, slaying all that he overtook; and when he had driven the whole multitude to the river side, where they were stopped by the current, lately increased by rains and not fordable, he put his soldiers in array over against them. The necessity of the fugitives provoked them to hazard a battle, because there was no place whither they could flee. They then extended themselves a very great way along the banks of the river and sustained the darts that were thrown at them as well as the attacks of the horsemen, who beat many of them and pushed them into the current. At this fight fifteen thousand of them were slain, while the number of those that were unwillingly forced to leap into Jordan was prodigious.

Here was a danger against which the little community of believers had been warned and which we may say, speaking of it generally, it had escaped. Some have supposed that, at whatever date the Apocalypse was written, we are to see in the imagery that pictures the escape of the woman the very day on which so many of the Jews perished: "And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." [1]

But to return to the war, the horrors of which did not reach the little community in Pella except by report: the Jews had now to do, not with a man like Gallus or Florus, but with a man whose military reputation was second to none in the Empire—a man who was already great, and who

[1] Rev. xii. 14-17.

soon heard prophetic whispers that he was to be greater hereafter. This was Vespasian. Nero did not love him. On not a few things did the Emperor pride himself, but there was nothing on which he prided himself more than his voice, which, however, was not musical. Vespasian, it seems, could not prevail on himself to praise Nero's vocal powers, and great offence was taken. But let Nero have his due. When things were becoming serious in the East, he knew the man, and appointed the man, who was most likely to subdue and pacify the rebels. By the command of the Emperor, Vespasian assembled a great army (more than 60,000), broke into Galilee and took several cities. For the particulars of this Galilean war we must refer to Josephus, but a word may be said as to its general course.

After the retreat of Gallus from Jerusalem, Josephus had been chosen as one of the generals of the Jews, and was sent into Galilee. The arrival of Vespasian there with his army caused such terror that Josephus himself, seeing things to be desperate, withdrew to Tiberias, and wrote thence to the Sanhedrim, urging the necessity of capitulation if they could not immediately supply him with a force strong enough to meet the foe. He had no hope of ultimate success. He had, indeed, at an earlier period, attempted to dissuade his countrymen from revolting, but, when they had determined to do so, he was patriot enough to make common cause with them. Sufficient help was not sent, but a feeling of honour constrained him still to carry on the struggle, and when Vespasian approached Jotapata, the most strongly fortified place in Galilee, Josephus threw himself into it and defended it for forty-seven days with ability and courage. It is related that, when the Romans brought up the battering-ram to the wall, and when, with fearful monotony, stroke after stroke was repeated, audible through the whole town, and when the women and children ran out of their houses weeping and lamenting, all knowing well what this dreadful knocking betokened, Josephus got ready great bags filled with chaff, and, when the ram was advanced, the Jews held the bags between it and the walls, breaking both the force and the noise of the strokes. But soon the Romans pierced the bags with long sickles, and the dreadful engine did its work, sending piece

after piece of the wall into the depth below. When the first cohorts advanced through the breach, the Jews poured boiling oil upon them, and the Roman soldiers rolled back in agony into the valley. But the garrison was now exhausted, and a deserter let the enemy know that, in the early morning hours, the watchmen could not help sleeping. Accordingly, on the forty-seventh day of the siege, shortly after midnight, the Romans advanced and took the fortress that was least of all prepared for the attack. A leaden sleep lay over the town, and a dense fog retarded the break of day. But, when it was light, the inhabitants saw the thick columns of Roman troops roll down from the fortress, and, after a bloody but short struggle, they were driven either into their houses or over the walls. On the second day began the slaughter and plunder within doors. Josephus was not to be seen. With forty others he had concealed himself in a cave. His place of refuge having been betrayed by a woman, Vespasian sent to him again and again, solemnly promising his life if he surrendered. Josephus hesitated for a while, but when the Romans were becoming impatient, and were on the point of throwing fire into the cave, he consented. But now the forty fanatics who had sought safety along with him insisted that he should take his own life rather than go forth a slave. Each agreed to do the same. He argued and expostulated in vain. At length he fell upon a scheme. He proposed that, since they must die, they should kill one another, determining by lot who should strike down his neighbour. How the thing was managed we do not know, but, according to his own account, it was Providence, and not he, that disposed. He was the leader, however, and it so happened that he was left standing on the heap of corpses with a single companion. Again he had recourse to reasoning, and now prevailed. It was resolved to proceed no further in the work of slaughter, and they both ascended from the cave. Josephus was brought before the Roman general, and, though many cried out that he should be put to death, Vespasian was induced to spare him by the intercession of Titus, by a regard, we may suppose, to his own promise, and by the desire to send the Galilean general as a trophy to Rome. In perilous situations Josephus was wont to foretell the future with all the confidence and

solemnity of an Old Testament prophet. He had done so in the cave without producing any impression. Now he desired an opportunity of speaking to Vespasian in private, as he had a message from God to him, and, when all had retired except Titus, he announced that Nero was destined to speedy destruction and that Vespasian and Titus would become sovereigns of the world. The general asked him sceptically why he had not foreseen the fall of Jotapata and his own capture; but, according to the account given by Josephus himself, he was satisfied on learning from the prisoners that the duration of the siege and the result had been accurately predicted. It is hardly necessary to say that the prophecy concerning Vespasian was likely enough to prove true, and all the more likely to prove true the more there were to utter it. When Vespasian was declared Emperor in 69 A.D., Josephus, after a confinement of more than two years, was released, and we find him in the service of Titus, odious to his countrymen, and suspected by the Romans.

Jerusalem, as we have seen, had already suffered lamentably from intestine commotion and anarchy when, in the spring of the year 70 A.D., Titus, whose father was now Emperor, began the siege. On the Mount of Olives—that mount where tears had been shed over the city—the new general pitched his tent. And he, too, felt pity. He knew well from deserters what had been already endured in the city, and twice, before the misery had reached its height, he sent to bring the people to submission, and thus to avert the bloodshed and ruin which must otherwise ensue. The first time his messenger was injured with a missile on the shoulder. The second time it was no other than Josephus that Titus employed, and he was struck on the head by a great stone, so that he fell down stunned. To the last, Titus was disposed to show mildness, but the blind resistance of the Jews was unconquerable. Worse than the robber bands within, and worse than the Roman foe without, came a third enemy—hunger. It was the time of the Passover when the siege began, and the population, including the strangers who had come up to the feast, was enormous. According to Josephus it was nearly three millions, and according to Tacitus six hundred thousand; but, even on the smaller estimate, the

number was vast for the extent of the city. The horrible thing is that the savage bands within, under their leaders John and Simon, were still living riotously when those whom they had plundered were beginning to walk the streets like shadows, when mothers, ceasing to have compassion, snatched the morsel from the mouths of their children, and when many stole without the gates by night to gather herbs and grass for their nourishment at the risk of being killed or made prisoners, or, if they returned with that miserable booty, of being plundered by others as hungry as themselves. So many fell into the hands of the besiegers and were crucified that at last, it is said, there was not enough wood for the crosses. At length, within the city, where the plague was raging and the hunger and mortality increasing, many begged the robbers to slay them with the sword. The number of deserters to the Roman camp became ever greater, but unfortunately for them, there was no lack of provisions there, abundance coming from Syria and other neighbouring lands, and many of the starved fugitives were unable to tame the vulture within and died of excess, expiring over the first meal they had seen for so many days. More appalling still, there were barbarians in the camp, who, having learned that many of the deserters had swallowed their gold, slew two thousand of them in one night that they might take their hidden treasures.

When the fortress of Antonia had been taken, Titus was still desirous of sparing the Temple and the city. Twice over Josephus was sent with offers of peace, but in vain. At length the storm came. The Jews retreated into the interior of the Temple. The enemy pursued, and one of them, raised on the shoulder of a fellow-soldier, cast a fire-brand into the sanctuary. Titus vainly endeavoured to restrain his men; neither threats nor blows could check their first fury. The Temple was burned on the 10th of August 70 A.D., one thousand one hundred and thirty years from the building of Solomon's. A month later the whole city was in the power of the conquerors. John and Simon, who had raged so violently and iniquitously within the walls, took refuge, as Josephus had done, in caves, but hunger forced them to come out and cast themselves on the mercy of

the Romans. Neither, certainly, deserved mercy. The one was condemned to perpetual imprisonment, the other was reserved to grace the triumph of Titus, which took place in 72 A.D., and immediately after it was put to death.

It is remarkable that in these last days, in which, according to Josephus, upward of a million perished, both a Mary and a Jesus come into the foreground of that sad picture. What is related of the former, however, is perhaps too horrible to repeat. She killed her child in a frenzy and sent the half to those men who were the authors of the misery that had worn both her and her infant to the bone. As for Jesus, probably his reason was clouded.

Jerusalem had been visited in the past, but never so terribly as now; and of this most dreadful judgment, more than of any that had preceded it, we have a full and detailed account. The long narrative of woe, such as had not been since the world began, gives sickening evidence of obstinate pride and fanaticism, as well as of grievous suffering. Long as it is, there is not a single word of a penitential crying to the Lord for His mercy. The Lord—this is the testimony of the Jew who describes the judgment upon his own nation—had smitten the people with blindness. The nation spiritually had become as a deep pool over which the breath of heaven did not pass; it was, to use the language of our Lord, a carcase.

CHAPTER XII.

GNOSTICISM—THE EBIONITES, CERINTHUS, AND THE DOCETÆ.

In speaking of the Apostle John, we recalled the legend related by several of the Fathers, that on one occasion, entering a bath at Ephesus, and seeing Cerinthus there, he came away in haste, expressing his fear lest the building should fall and crush them. The well-known legend expresses the Apostle's deep detestation of heresy, corresponding with the ardour of his love. Cerinthus is commonly regarded as the first who taught principles afterwards developed and embodied in the Gnostic system. He is certainly the first whom we know by name; but that some, at least, of the germs of Gnosticism had been previously scattered, we learn from the writings of the New Testament, and particularly from some of the later writings of Paul, who, though he had previously recommended the γνῶσις (knowledge), and reckoned it among the *charismata* — the gifts bestowed by the one Spirit for the common edification of the Church—yet lived to see the term grossly and dangerously abused by men who undervalued the Christian faith, and therefore saw cause for lifting up his voice in warning against the ἀντιθέσεις τῆς ψευδωνύμου γνώσεως—"oppositions of the knowledge which is falsely so called." We cannot, therefore, hesitate to say that the germs of Gnosticism existed before the days when Cerinthus taught—before the end of the first or the beginning of the second century.

But what is Gnosticism? We find the Apostle distinguishing between a true and a false γνῶσις. Nor can we suppose that by the former he simply means the acceptance of revealed truth in the grammatical sense of the words used by inspired teachers, to the exclusion of reflection and speculation. Reflection and speculation, we may believe, are permitted among all rational beings—among unfallen creatures, and among

redeemed spirits, unless we imagine that the knowledge they possess is at once perfect and infinite, and that nothing remains for them to look into; that there is no mystery in God's nature and ways of which they do not already comprehend fully the length and breadth and height and depth. It is no marvel that the Jews of Alexandria speculated on the origin of the world, on the possibility of the absolute God coming into immediate contact with matter, and on the necessity of supposing the λόγος ἐνδιαθετός and the λόγος προφορικός, in order to account for the manifestation of the infinite in the finite world. Of these and similar questions they may not have found a satisfactory solution, but it is not astonishing that the questions should have been put. It would be astonishing if the gospel of the Infinite, entering into a closer union with the finite than had been dreamed of in Philo's philosophy, had not quickened the understanding, as it ought assuredly to quicken the heart. The "mystery of godliness," because it is a mystery, is fitted to awaken speculation; but, because it is the mystery of *godliness*, speculation should be devout. Take the great declaration which has been called an "evangelium in evangelio": "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." We are told that heathens, on first hearing and apprehending it, have entreated that the word spoken should be repeated to them again and again. Receiving at once a simple, child-like, Divine faith, they have been melted to tears and bound to the service of the living God without raising any of the problems that had often occupied the minds of their teachers. This may be called an example of "the foolishness of preaching," but it is to the glory of the gospel and of Him who gave it that this foolishness has so often been shown, by demonstration of the Spirit and of power, to be wiser than the wisdom of men. But we may recall the famous saying of Gregory; and what he applied to the Scriptures generally is true of the "evangelium in evangelio": "There are shallows which a lamb may wade, and depths where an elephant may swim." [1] The gift of the only begotten Son! There is in the words

[1] Compare the words of Erasmus: "To the little it becomes little; to the great more than great."

something that may reach the understanding and heart of the youngest child, and there is much in them that may call forth the profound study of the wisest sage. They are the brook flowing softly by the green pastures, but they are also an ocean which storms may visit, and over which the sun may not always shine. For there is a false γνῶσις as well as a true; and therefore, though it may not be unlawful to speculate, we must take heed how we speculate.

The false γνῶσις, Gnosticism, sets itself above revealed truth, and, when it cannot retain it consistently with its theories, tears itself away from it. Instead of yielding obedience to the faith, it profanes its mysteries by making them the mere objects of philosophical inquiry.

Hence, while there may be found in the Gnostic a dogmatism more unedifying, offensive, and inexcusable than that of those who hold by the immutable standard of truth, there is developed a pride of understanding which looks down superciliously upon the multitude of believers as ignorant, uninitiated, and derides, or at best pities, their simple, childlike faith. But as Gnosticism, the religion of the "knowing," proceeds in a false spirit, exalting itself above revealed truth, it is to be noticed, secondly, that, in consequence, it is false in doctrine. It lies in the very nature of religious truth that it cannot be rightly apprehended except by the humble, loving mind. There may be guesses at truth, and glimpses of truth, in systems devised by men who were not themselves of the truth; but, widely divergent as the theories of the Gnostics were from one another—numerous as were the "oppositions of the knowledge which is falsely so called"—they were all mixed with pernicious errors, and there was none of them that did not profane the great mystery of godliness, "God manifest in the flesh"; so that to Gnosticism, as it has been said, "The proper fatherland, the home of religion, will remain ever strange. It will make many voyages about it, but never reach it."[1] So much we may say generally at present on Gnosticism—the *gnosis* which was false, and which may be characterised as such both for its spirit and for its teaching. What has been said will be illustrated when we come to notice particular systems.

[1] Hagenbach [*Kirchengesch.* Ste Vorlesung.]

But Cerinthus, the heretic whom John is said to have encountered in the bath at Ephesus, and against whom some passages of John's gospel have from ancient times been supposed to be directed, is sometimes classed with the Ebionites rather than with the Gnostics. Who were the Ebionites? What is Ebionitism?

After Christianity had been separated externally from Judaism, as it was more manifestly and thoroughly after the destruction of Jerusalem (70 A.D.) than ever before, the name "Galileans" or "Nazarenes," which had previously been applied as a contemptuous appellation to all believers, came to be restricted to those who continued to adhere to the standpoint of the Judaising Christians—those, that is, who continued to revere and observe the law of Moses as of perpetual and universal obligation. It is possible that some of the sect did not consider the obligation to be universal; that they did not extend it beyond the descendants of Abraham according to the flesh. They believed concerning Christ that He was the Son of God, and supernaturally born of the Virgin. In proof of this is adduced the testimony of Jerome: "Credunt in Christum Dei filium, natum de Virgine Maria, in quem et nos credimus."[1] "They wished," it has been said, "to be Jews and Christians at the same time, and so they were neither truly"; and hence they have been sometimes called a schismatical rather than a heretical party. With heretics, however, they have generally been classed; and we cannot wonder that this place should be assigned to men who, though their tenets—at least the tenets of most of them—may not have differed from those held by a multitude of Jewish converts in the earliest days of the Church, had still remained blind to the true and necessarily transient nature of the ceremonial dispensation, resisting the teaching not only of the apostles but of the providence of God. But in the case of men who will not receive the full revelation of Divine truth are sometimes verified the words, which are often fulfilled in many ways besides, "From him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath." The Nazarenes are frequently thrown together with that other party whose very name has been regarded by some as expressive of spiritual

[1] ["They believe in Christ the Son of God, born of the virgin Mary, in whom we also believe."]

impoverishment and dryness—the Ebionites; and it is not improbable that, though most of the Nazarenes may have originally believed in the eternal Sonship and supernatural birth of Jesus, and may have recognised Paul as the Apostle of the Gentiles, many of them in course of time abandoned those principles and allowed themselves to be carried so far by their Judaising tendency as to adopt a system wholly destructive of all that was distinctive in Christianity. That the system of the Ebionites may be thus characterised will appear from the simple statement of these two things: that they denied the Divinity of Christ, believing Him to be a mere man, the son of Joseph and Mary; and that they held the Apostle Paul in great odium as a supposed apostate from the law which they revered. Whether the name mean the "poor men" (אֶבְיוֹן)—poor in earthly goods or in intellect—or whether it be derived from a person called Ebion, who is represented as the founder of the sect, has been disputed. The former opinion, however, is generally preferred. It is not probable that the name was originally given in mockery, carrying an allusion either to the beggarly elements to which they adhered or to the miserably jejune system of Christian truth which they taught. Origen saw in the name, or put into it, such a significance. It was considered by him as expressive of the poverty of their doctrine; and, indeed, if their doctrine can be called Christian at all, it is simply because, while they denied that Jesus was the Son of God from eternity, they held that He was the Messiah. It would appear that some of the Ebionites introduced Gnostic elements into their systems, teaching that there had been a number of incarnations, as in Adam, in Enoch, in Noah, in Abraham, in Isaac, in Jacob, and, at length, in Jesus; but it is obvious that an incarnation which the second Adam is represented to have had in common with the first involves the denial of the supreme Divinity of the Saviour, and this, as I have mentioned, was the first characteristic of Ebionitism. Some among them, it is to be particularly noticed,—and here is an idea which appears prominently in the system of Cerinthus,—taught that at the baptism in the Jordan, the Logos, or Divine nature, the heavenly Christ, came down upon the man Jesus and united Himself with him.

Cerinthus, who was a Jew by birth, and is said to have studied philosophy at Alexandria, set out from the idea of a supreme God, who is exalted above all contact with the world of sense, and who remains in unapproachable glory, unknown and unknowable. The world, he taught, was created by angels, presided over by one of their number, who was the sovereign and lawgiver of the Jews, but to whom, as to the Jews over whom he ruled and to all men upon earth, the Supreme Being was incomprehensible. Here, then, we have the peculiarly Gnostic idea of the Demiurgus, a subordinate being (not the Logos), who is introduced as the creator of the world. The Jewish religion, though the lawgiver and sovereign of the Jews was only a creation, was superior to all other religions, which were of merely earthly origin. But, while superior to them, it was not equal to the fuller, though still imperfect, revelation which has appeared in the Messiah. Jesus was the Messiah. But how, according to Cerinthus, did Jesus become the Messiah? Born of Joseph and Mary, by ordinary generation, He distinguished Himself for His wisdom and piety in such a degree that He became capable and worthy of the Divine honour. At His baptism the Logos, whom Cerinthus calls the ἄνω Χριστός, descended upon Him from heaven in the form of a dove. It was then that Jesus became conscious of His high destiny, and henceforth, until the day of His apprehension, He was endowed with the power of working miracles, and with supernatural knowledge of the invisible God. When His apprehension took place—and it took place, according to Cerinthus, at the instigation of the God of the Jews—the Logos departed from Him and returned to the Father. He seems to have held, however, that Jesus not only rose from the dead, but that again the Logos was united with Him. For Cerinthus was certainly a Chiliast or Millenarian. He taught that, as a continuation and completion of the Divine revelation, after the world had lasted six hundred years, there would arise in the seventh, the Sabbath, Millennium, a new and heavenly order of things. The righteous, raised from their graves, would enjoy unspeakable delights in Palestine under their victorious King, the Messiah, Jesus associated with the Logos. The millenarianism of Cerinthus is remark-

able, and in this tenet at least he differs most widely from the Gnostics. It is altogether repugnant to their ideas and tendencies. On the other hand, their points of agreement are only too numerous and striking, and we are justified in regarding him as the forerunner of Basilides and Valentinus, whose systems are afterwards to be noticed. Some, indeed, hold that Gnosticism originated with the Judaising sects, and was gradually purged of its more grossly Jewish elements. After the brief statement here given of the views of Cerinthus, it is not difficult to recall passages in John that might seem to have been originally directed against him. It is a singular thing that some have maintained that Cerinthus was the author of the Apocalypse, and that, to gain the wider acceptance of his millenarian views, he assumed the revered name of the beloved disciple.

There was a class of heretics who, starting from the same fundamental view as Cerinthus—that it is impossible for the infinite God to come into contact with matter — arrived at a very different result. Regarding matter as the seat of evil, they denied that the Divine nature had united itself with the human in Christ. Sinlessness, they argued, could not be maintained in a real body. They accordingly represented the body of Christ as unreal. They changed it into a phantom, and did not shrink from the necessary and obvious conclusion that He only seemed to suffer and die. These heretics, who made a great noise in their time, but whose views it is needless to combat at the present day, were called Docetæ (from δοκεῖν), or Phantasiastæ. Whether John had these heretics in view or not when he wrote his Gospel and Epistles, it is certain that he sets down as the central point of the Christian confession the faith in the incarnation of the everlasting Word, agreeing with the other apostles in his recognition of the supreme Divinity of Christ, and in the apprehension which that recognition involves of Christianity as the true, perfect, absolute religion.

There is one general remark which the view I have given of these heretical systems may immediately suggest. Their authors seems to have treated the Scriptures of both the Old and the New Testament in the most daring and irreverent manner, choosing for themselves (αἱρέομαι) what they would

believe, holding just such positions as appeared to be in accordance with certain fundamental notions which they had embraced, and rejecting or ignoring everything that appeared to militate against them. As to the New Testament, which was nearly completed when they began to raise their heads, there is the utmost difficulty in determining what books they regarded as authoritative, and what books they did not. We are told that, in some cases, the books of which they acknowledged the authority were not received by them in their integrity and purity, but were mutilated and corrupted. It is not astonishing, therefore, that there should be great discrepancies in the accounts given by ancient writers of the books they received as authoritative; and, indeed, one of the Fathers—Tertullian—declared that it was vain to argue with them on the ground of Scripture, as it was impossible to tell what they would accept and what they would repudiate. On this subject some striking remarks have been made by Blunt.[1] Having noticed that the bold and often unscrupulous manner in which the ancient heretics treated the sacred Scripture was calculated to produce the greatest confusion in the Church—to perplex its members and cripple its immediate advance—he goes on to say that, "eventually, God overruled this opposition for good, as He did direct persecution itself; and that which seemed a serious hindrance to the cause, and for a time was so, became, under his controlling hand a powerful help. For this controversy with the heretics respecting the authority of the documents on which the Christians relied, led to the instant investigation of it. The Church was put upon the defence of its Canon, whilst the means of defending it were accessible. It is highly probable that had no heresies arisen in the Church till the sixth or seventh century, we should never have had the Canon of the Scriptures satisfactorily established: so true was it, even in this sense, that 'there must be heresies, that they which are approved might be made manifest.' As it was, the investigation arose while the author could be identified; the character of his hand was known; persons were living who had heard him with their own ears acknowledge the writing; incidents in his life necessarily implied that it was his; he had never disowned it,

[1] J. J. Blunt, *The Church in the Three First Centuries*, p. 165 (1856).

though aware that it was ascribed to him and circulated in his name, and that serious mischief would accrue to the Church if the import was false and yet uncontradicted. Moreover, that I am not indulging in any hypothetical case, when I am supposing such vigilance to be exercised with respect to the Canon of Scripture, is clear from facts which may be adduced. Thus Serapion, a bishop of Antioch, in the second century, writes to Rhosson, a church in Cilicia, respecting a reputed gospel of St. Peter, circulating in that church, which he had at first regarded with favour, but which on examination he had rejected, the object of his letter being mainly to inform them of this fact, and to tell them that, though receiving Peter and the other apostles as he would receive Christ, still that spurious writings, passing under their names, he repudiated, being accustomed to investigate such matters, and aware that the Church had not come into possession of such by regular tradition." The writer goes on to mention some other facts of the same nature. He even speaks with favour of the view—which, however, he does not unhesitatingly adopt—that about two centuries after the birth of Christ, in the time of Tertullian, who speaks of the *authentica literæ* of the apostles, the autographs of those inspired writers were still in existence.[1] *Authentica literæ ipsæ* may mean only true copies of the originals, and that is enough; but there is some force in the argument that, if the early Christians were "alive to the value of the ashes of the saints and martyrs," it may "be presumed that their reverence for the manuscripts of those who were the greatest of both would be proportionate, and that they would cherish them with the most scrupulous care." At all events, there are not wanting facts in confirmation of the statement, to which support is given by the very existence of heretical sects that mutilated and corrupted the word, that in an early period of the Church's history the sacred Scriptures of the New Testament, both Canon and text, were subjected to the most careful and rigid scrutiny; and it may be added that they were tested with the result that, with regard to all the books that are now acknowledged by the Church, not only probability, but certainty, was attained. It is worth while remembering that there were Ebionites and

[1] [*De Pudicitia*, 10.]

Docetæ in the world were it for no other reason than this, that their heretical opposition was thus caused to work for the good of the Church in a way that has been felt through all succeeding centuries.

The writer I have quoted is not so successful on another point which he notices when treating of the early heretics.[1] Those false teachers often appealed to tradition—a tradition which they alleged to have originated in the *vivâ voce* teaching of the apostles. The early Church, he says, did not repudiate tradition. It accepted the challenge of the heretics and professed itself prepared to defend its doctrine and constitution by tradition as well as scripture; only the tradition must be pure. But the one passage which he adduces in support of this position is from Tertullian, and it certainly attributes no authority to tradition independent of Scripture. "Go to the Apostolic Churches, in which the very seats of the apostles preside over their own places, in which their own authentic writings are read, speaking with the voice of each, and making the face of each present to the eye. Is Achaia nearest thee? thou hast Corinth; Macedonia? thou hast Philippi; Italy? Rome. She joineth the law and the prophets with the writings of the evangelists and apostles, and here drinketh in her faith."

[1] [*The Church in the Three First Centuries*, p. 171.]

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CHRISTIANS AND THE ROMAN POWER—DOMITIAN AND NERVA.

By the fall of Jerusalem, as we have seen, Jewish Christianity had lost its mightiest external support, and, while it was degenerating, and destined soon to disappear, the pure Christianity, which had struck its roots in the great central cities of the Gentile world, continued to spread. But the distinction between them was not perceived by the Romans. The Christians were regarded as a Jewish sect. The capitation-tax imposed upon the Jews after the conquest of their country was demanded from the Christians also, and frequently harsh measures were used to extort payment. Moreover, the doctrine of the Messiah and His Kingdom taught by the Christians was easily liable to the misconstruction that they also cherished political hopes and hatched revolutionary schemes. And so it is recorded that the successor of Titus, Domitian, who is frequently contrasted with his brother, "the darling of the human race," and is described as a compound of suspicion and cruelty, caused inquiry to be made in Palestine with the view of ascertaining whether there were any of David's descendants still to be found there. And there were really still living there kinsmen of Jesus—the grandsons of that Jude who was called the "brother of the Lord." The Emperor had them brought before him. They were plain country people. On being asked whether they were of the house of David, they answered in the affirmative; on being questioned as to their resources, they answered that they possessed among them about 9000 denarii, which, however, they had not in ready money — it was the value they put on a piece of ground of which they were the owners, and which they wrought with their own hands. In proof of their statement they showed the hard callosities which their manual

labour had caused. And then, on being examined further as to Christ and His kingdom, they declared that His was no earthly kingdom, but a heavenly, which was to be set up in its glory when the Lord would come again to judge the quick and the dead, and to reward every man according to his work. Upon this the Emperor, suspicious as was his nature, felt satisfied that there was no ground for serious apprehension, and dismissed them. It is thus, at least, that the occurrence is related by Eusebius on the authority of Hegesippus, who came to Rome in the age of the Antonines. Under Domitian, according to the most generally received account, John was banished to the island of Patmos. It is certain that in this reign, although there did not break out a violent persecution extending to any considerable number of victims, there were individuals who were not spared. Flavius Clemens,[1] a cousin of the Emperor, was put to death, and Domitilla, his wife, a niece of the Emperor, was banished, and others were executed on account of their atheism, as it was expressed, that being the charge they brought upon themselves by refusing to adore the gods of the heathen. Under Nerva the Christians enjoyed rest, but his reign was short (96–98 A.D.), and persecution broke out anew under his successor Trajan.

[1] [Who has been supposed by some to be Clemens Romanus, the author of the Epistle to the Corinthians.]

CHAPTER XIV.

THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS—CLEMENS ROMANUS.

With the accession of Trajan ends the apostolic age. About this time John entered into his rest. A new generation entered into the labours of Christ's inspired servants, who had all fallen asleep looking for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of their Divine Saviour. Among those who arose to fill the gaps stand prominently forward the men that are designated the Apostolic Fathers: Clement, Barnabas, Hermas, Ignatius, Polycarp, and Papias. With the exception of the last mentioned, all leave to the Church monuments in writing; or, at least, there are writings still extant that bear their names. But these writings, even such of them as are commonly admitted to be genuine, have been very differently estimated by different Protestants. Thus, while some speak of the contrast between the writings of the apostolic fathers and those of the apostles themselves, particularly of the Apostle Paul, and say that, in passing from the latter to the former, they feel as if they were descending from pure Alpine heights of glory and beauty to a low, flat, unfruitful and uninteresting region, we find the following language used of Clement's first epistle, which alone can be safely ascribed to him: "The letter bears a striking resemblance in turn of thought, and even in style, to the writings of the New Testament. It is, as it has often been called, a truly apostolic writing. The writer never speculates. He forms to himself no complete system of theology. He believes in the truths as facts, and they come out as they have relation to the practice of daily life."[1] But this writer notices one or two points of difference, especially the circumstance that, while the New Testament writers "never indulge in any lengthened descrip-

[1] Donaldson, *The Apostolic Fathers*, p. 138.

tions of the beauties of the world around them, or of the sun, moon, and stars," Clement "has a whole chapter devoted to the order and harmony of the world"—a chapter which "is really a beautiful piece of writing, and throws light on that tendency towards expansion of style which gradually makes the works of Christian writers more voluminous as we travel from the apostles.[1] The letter undoubtedly abounds in Biblical expressions, and in Biblical thought and sentiment, but not more so than do many discourses which are delivered at the present day, and is not entitled any more than they are to the epithet apostolical. Opening at random, I read as follows:—

"Chap. XLII.—*The order of Ministers in the Church.*—The apostles have preached the gospel to us from the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ [has done so] from God. Christ, therefore, was sent forth by God, and the apostles by Christ. Both these appointments, then, were made in an orderly way, according to the will of God. Having, therefore, received their orders, and being fully assured by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and established in the word of God, with full assurance of the Holy Ghost, they went forth proclaiming that the Kingdom of God was at hand. And thus preaching through countries and cities, they appointed the first-fruits [of their labours], having first proved them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons of those who should afterwards believe. Nor was this any new thing, since indeed many ages before it was written concerning bishops and deacons. For thus saith the Scripture in a certain place, 'I will appoint their bishops in righteousness, and their deacons in faith.'"[2] The passage of which so remarkable a reading is here given is Is. lx. 17: "I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness." Clement's words are *καταστήσω τοὺς ἐπισκόπους αὐτῶν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ καὶ τοὺς διακόνους αὐτῶν ἐν πίστει.* Even from the Septuagint, which Clement used, there is a wide and startling departure: *καὶ δώσω τοὺς ἄρχοντάς σου ἐν εἰρήνῃ καὶ τοὺς ἐπισκόπους σου ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ*, where *ἐπισκόπους*, of course, should be translated simply "overseers."

[1] Donaldson, *The Apostolic Fathers*, p. 139.

[2] Trans. by Roberts, Donaldson, and Crombie. *Ante-Nicene Christian Lib.* vol. i. p. 36.

In the New Testament there are two or three perplexing quotations from ancient Scripture, but there is no instance of a passage being twisted in this way.

But nothing more strikingly shows that we have passed from the apostolic to the post-apostolic age; nothing makes us feel more profoundly the immense superiority of the inspired Word to the writings even of the immediate successors of the apostles—even of a Clement, who is by no means to be despised—than the famous passage on the phœnix as an emblem of the resurrection. The same fable was frequently reproduced afterwards with the view of illustrating and confirming the same doctrine, and for this reason also it may be interesting to give the words of the first Christian writer who uses it:

"Chap. xxv.—Let us consider that wonderful sign which takes place in Eastern lands, that is, in Arabia and the countries round about. There is a certain kind of bird which is called a phœnix. This is the only one of its kind, and lives five hundred years; and, when the time of its dissolution draws near that it must die, it builds itself a nest of frankincense, myrrh, and other spices, into which, when the time is fulfilled, it enters and dies. But as the flesh decays a certain kind of worm is produced, which, being nourished by the juices of the dead bird, brings forth feathers. Then, when it has acquired strength, it takes up that nest in which are the bones of its parent, and bearing these it passes from the land of Arabia into Egypt, to the city called Heliopolis. And in open day, flying in the sight of all men, it places them on the altar of the sun, and, having done this, hastens back to its former abode. The priests then inspect the registers of the dates, and find that it has returned exactly as the five hundredth year was complete."

The first who speaks of this bird is Herodotus, who, however, is not only careful to mention that he never saw it, but prefixes to the account received from the priests of Heliopolis the words ἐμοὶ μὲν οὐ πιστὰ λέγοντες, "though I did not believe them" (Bk. ii. 73). The quotations I have given here are both from Clement's First Epistle to the Corinthians. It is not necessary to add any from the Second, more especially as it is considered by very many to be spurious.

The author of the epistle from which these two chapters have been quoted is called Clemens Romanus, to distinguish him from Clemens Alexandrinus, who lived a century later. According to the opinion of many, he is the same as the Clement mentioned in the Epistle to the Philippians: "With Clement also, and with other my fellow-labourers, whose names are in the book of life."[1] This is a testimony that outweighs all the volumes of biography the world could contain. Were we to believe, as myriads do, that Clement was one of the first popes, and that the Christian world lay at his feet, it would be as nothing in comparison: "Rejoice not that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven." The most weighty authority for identifying Clemens Romanus with the Clement mentioned in Philippians is Eusebius, who affirms it without hesitation, in the fifteenth chapter of the third book, where he states at the same time that Clemens succeeded Anacletus, Bishop of Rome, in the twelfth year of Domitian (81–96 A.D.). According to the testimony of the same historian, he died in the third year of the reign of Trajan. There arose a legend that he was banished by the Emperor to the Tauric Chersonesus, and there suffered martyrdom.

The date of Clement's epistle is uncertain, but most probably it was composed towards the end of the century. Eusebius not only mentions the occasion of its being written, but gives such an account of its reception as to show the great estimation in which it was held by the ancient Church. "There is one acknowledged epistle of this Clement, greatly admirable (*μεγάλη τε καὶ θαυμασία*), which he wrote in the name of the Church of Rome to the Church at Corinth, sedition having then arisen in the latter church. We are aware that this epistle has been publicly read in very many churches, both in old times, and also in our own day." The precise nature of the divisions which distracted the Church of Corinth at this time we do not learn, either from Eusebius or from the epistle itself. All that we learn clearly from the latter is that they had led to the unjust removal of certain presbyters. Clement exhorts to patience and humility, to unity and obedience. He sets before his readers the hope of a glorious

[1] [The identity is discussed by Lightfoot—*Apostolic Fathers.*]

resurrection, of which he sees emblems, not only in that Arabian bird, but in the change of day and night, and of seed-time and harvest. In the whole visible creation he hears a voice not only declaring the glory of Him who built all things, but addressing stubborn and wilful men, and schooling them to obey the Divine law, like sun, moon, and stars, and the fruitful earth, and even the vast, troubled ocean, whose proud waves are stayed where God bids. But for examples of obedience and humility he appeals to the sacred history, beginning with the most ancient times, and not failing to mention the most exalted of all examples — the perfect example of Jesus Christ, which should ever have such power over all who have come under the easy yoke of His grace. Already, too, he could appeal to the examples which the history of the Church afforded—to the γενναῖα ὑποδείγματα, "illustrious examples"—of men whose names were not all written, as his own name is supposed by many to be, in the New Testament, but were written, as his also was, in the book of life. But Paul's fellow-labourer, while he exhorts most earnestly to love and obedience, at the same time exhibits Christ as the brightness of the Father's glory, as the sole foundation of our hope, our High Priest, our Intercessor, and our strength. It is Christian doctrine and morals we have in the Epistle. In passing from Paul to Clement we may be descending from Alpine heights to the plain, but it is still the same Divine air we breathe—the air without which our souls cannot live.

Having set before you a general account of the contents of this Epistle to the Corinthians I now call attention to one or two points in particular.

In the first place, it furnishes no evidence whatever in favour of the papal or even of the episcopal constitution of the Church, as it afterwards existed. This is remarkable, not only in view of the position which Clement held, or is supposed to have held, but also in view of the object for which the Epistle was written. The authority of presbyters is asserted and vindicated, as we have seen from the passage above quoted, but there is no trace in that passage, or anywhere else in the Epistle, of a distinction between presbyters and bishops.

Secondly, it appears from the testimony of Eusebius, already quoted, that this "great and admirable epistle," as he terms it, was written in the name of the Church of Rome to the Church of Corinth, and the Epistle itself begins with these words: "The Church of God which sojourns at Rome, to the Church of God sojourning at Corinth, to them that are called and sanctified by the will of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ; grace unto you and peace from Almighty God, through Jesus Christ, be multiplied." This is the first example of a Christian community addressing a letter of admonition and exhortation to a sister community. That such a communication should proceed first of all from the Church of Rome is certainly a most notable circumstance, when we think of the course which ecclesiastical history subsequently took. But it is not difficult to account for it. We see herein an illustration of the Lord's word, "a city set upon an hill cannot be hid," and a confirmation of the testimony borne by Paul to the Church of Rome at a time when there is no evidence that it had been visited by Peter or by any of the apostles. "I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all," it is said in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, "that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world;" and nowhere in the whole world had such terrible persecution been endured for Christ's name, both in Nero's time and subsequently, though not in so fearful a degree, in the time of Domitian. A Church that had produced so many martyrs would naturally be counted worthy of double honour even though no idea existed of papal supremacy, or of the powers of bishops as distinct from that of presbyters, or of the lordship of one Christian community over another.

The first words in Clement's epistle that follow the salutation at once give probability to the statement that it was written toward the end of the reign of Domitian, and they recall the more cruel sufferings which had been endured thirty years before. "Owing, dear brethren, to the sudden and successive calamitous events which have befallen ourselves, we feel that we have been somewhat tardy in turning our attention to the points respecting which you consulted us, and especially to that shameful and detestable sedition,

utterly abhorrent to the elect of God, which a few rash and self-confident persons have kindled to such a point of frenzy that your venerable and illustrious name, worthy to be universally loved, has suffered grievous injury." It would appear, then, that the Epistle had not been written ultroneously. The Church of Rome had been consulted on the points that are treated in it; and this is a proof that, while there was esteem on the one side, there was no arrogance on the other. Throughout the Epistle the Church speaks, and there is nothing to throw any light on the position or history of the individual who was commissioned to compose it. That Clement was the writer, and that he held office in the Church, we know from extraneous sources.

I remark, in the third place, on the fact that there is generally thought to be in the letter of Clemens some slight trace of the idea that presbyters or bishops are invested with a priestly office. But the language that may be thus construed is very obscure. It occurs parenthetically, in the fortieth and forty-first chapters, which some have pronounced an interpolation, alleging that the style of speaking savours in itself of a later age and is opposed to the rest of the epistle, which uniformly presents the Church and its offices in their simplest forms and relations. Others, however—Dr. Donaldson, for example—hold that this objection is unfounded, and that there cannot be a doubt that Clement did not transfer the system of the Jewish priesthood to the Christian Church: "He merely refers to it as an instance of God's orderly arrangements in His dealings with His people, and he leaves the application of the particulars of the Jewish system entirely to his readers." The only objection to the genuineness of this portion of the epistle in which Dr. Donaldson sees force, but not sufficient force to convince him, is the use, at the end of the chapter, of the word λαικός in a sense that was not known till long after: ὁ λαϊκὸς ἄνθρωπος τοῖς λαϊκοῖς προστάγμασιν δέδεται—"The layman is bound by the laws that pertain to laymen." The passage, then, is somewhat doubtful. Its meaning is obscure, and it has been interpreted by some in a sense that harmonises with our view of New Testament teaching on the office of the

Christian ministry. But, even if it taught that presbyter was priest, we remember that the ancient Church itself, which held the Letter of Clement in such high esteem that it was publicly read in many of the Christian assemblies through a succession of generations, did not exalt it to a level with inspired writings: it did not place it in the Canon.

There are other writings that bear the name of Clement, but are now admitted on all hands to be spurious. Among these the chief are the "Recognitions" and "Homilies," which were composed after the middle of the second century, and are, according to both Protestant and Roman Catholic authors of the present day, the work of an Ebionitic Gnostic, resident at Rome, who, with the view of giving them apostolic authority, proclaimed that they were written by Clement on the basis of communications which he had received directly from Peter.

It was doubtless in its way a homage to the great name of Clement that the dark power of error should seek to clothe itself with his authority, but it was, at the same time, a grievous dishonour to represent him as teaching principles that deviated lamentably, not only from the simplicity of the gospel as it appears in the works of the Apostle, but from the truth which he had exhibited in his own genuine production. It is a debt we owe to criticism that, in the eyes of all intelligent men, it has succeeded in sweeping away the cobwebs that had obscured for centuries a noble and venerable form. It is not with the books that bore the name of Clement as with those of the Sybil. Away with the false, and the price is, not the same as before, but a hundred times, yea, incalculably greater than before. It is not Paul we read in that First Epistle to the Corinthians, written in name of the Church of Rome; but there is nothing inconsistent in the belief that we read the very words of that fellow-labourer of Paul whose name, as the Apostle testified, was written in the book of life. The mist of errors which surrounded his name having been dispersed, we discern the pure mild light of the first star that rises in the firmament of ecclesiastical history; and, if the greater stars that shine on the pages of inspiration excel unspeakably in glory, yet this feebler radiance also

is celestial, and is a gift to the Church from the "Father of Lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."[1]

[1] According to the usual opinion, Clement's Letter was written towards the end of the first century. The mention, made at the beginning, of sudden and repeated persecutions suits the time of Domitian. According to others, it was written later, as there is mention made in it of the apocryphal "Book of Judith"—"a veiled description of events which fall into the last times of Trajan."

CHAPTER XV.

THE CHRISTIANS AND THE ROMAN POWER—THE TIMES OF TRAJAN—PLINY'S LETTER—IGNATIUS.

BEFORE speaking of Ignatius, another of the apostolic fathers, we shall glance at the position of the Christians under the Roman Empire at the beginning of the second century. Towards the end of the first century, in the reign of Domitian (81–96 A.D.), individuals, as we have seen, suffered persecution even unto death. They were required to pay the capitation-tax imposed on the Jews. Although it was contrary to Roman law, information from slaves was received against them. At this very time, when Jews and Christians were thrown together by the popular odium, and alike accused of atheism because they would not swear by the gods or offer sacrifice to them, the Jews, unmoved, but rather hardened, by the terrible judgments that had fallen upon them, were wont to curse Christ and the Christian name in their synagogues. It was long believed that the most eminent among his unconverted countrymen—Flavius Josephus—was so far from sharing this deep-seated enmity that he regarded Jesus with reverence, and did not question the reality of the miracles ascribed to Him, even the greatest of them—His resurrection. The famous passage in the *Antiquities* (Bk. xviii. ch. iii. 3), if it were genuine, would certainly show that this Jew was not far from the kingdom—so near, indeed, that we cannot conceive on what grounds he could justify himself for remaining without. The passage is as follows: "Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call Him a man, for He was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to Him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us,

had condemned Him to the cross, those that loved Him at the first did not forsake Him; for He appeared to them alive again the third day; as the Divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning Him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from Him, are not extinct at this day." If this paragraph is to be accepted as genuine, we naturally ask, "Why should the tribe have been extinct, and why should Josephus himself not have belonged to the tribe?" But compare the testimony here borne to Jesus with the way in which Josephus treats the Messianic hope in a passage unmistakably genuine, and bear in mind the fact that he was not a Christian, which I have taken for granted, and for which ancient external evidence could be produced if such evidence were needed, and there is abundant reason for concurring in the opinion, now general, that the passage, if not wholly spurious, is greatly interpolated. A charitable hypothesis is that the interpolations—the passage being supposed to be in part genuine—were originally marginal annotations by a Christian reader. This might be especially the case with the words, "He was [the] Christ." This expression is certainly too much except on the supposition, which, if it had not been already made, might have been pronounced impossible, that Josephus was himself a Christian. The Jewish historian died about the end of the first century.

After the brief reign of Nerva (96–98 A.D.), during which the Christians were left unmolested, things took a most unfavourable turn under Trajan (98–117 A.D.). This Emperor was deeply penetrated with the ancient Roman spirit, and was most zealous for the maintenance of the old religion, which he regarded as the firmest support of the State. Few of the sovereigns of Rome have been more highly extolled than Trajan. Not only was he distinguished for his victorious expeditions, by which he extended the bounds of the Empire beyond the Euphrates, and for his wise and impartial administration of justice when religion was not in question, but it was his motto to rule as he would be ruled, and he lived in daily remembrance of the oath taken before the Senate to do nothing that might injure the life or honour of law-abiding citizens. He was surnamed the "father of his

country." That such a ruler should be found in the rank of persecutors, while it may awaken sad reflections, recalls the remark which has frequently been made, that the nobler and better of the Roman emperors, such as a Trajan, a Marcus Aurelius, a Diocletian, inflicted the most cruel sufferings on the Christians, while many of the worst, such as a Commodus, a Caracalla, and a Heliogabalus, left them in tranquillity. There are exceptions on both sides, though it is to be noted that the Neronian persecution was not strictly the result even of religious hatred. I have seen somewhere the striking observation that of the two most virtuous philosophers of heathen antiquity, the one was the greatest victim of persecution and the other the greatest author of it. The first was Socrates; the second was Marcus Aurelius, already named among the noble rulers of Rome, who was the most terrible persecutor before the third century. We know from the New Testament of one who, with a good conscience, first inflicted, and then endured, persecution.

We are not to suppose, however, that Trajan was actuated by religious bigotry. The welfare of the State was his constant and chief concern, and he held the general principle that any society that pretended to govern itself independently of the State was dangerous, as it might become a hotbed of sedition and revolution, and therefore was not to be tolerated. He prohibited all secret societies and combinations, applying the prohibition where it is difficult now to see the applicability of the word "secret" or the necessity of secrecy. Thus it is related that a society of work-people who had united with the view of rendering prompt assistance in case of fire, were obliged to break up their association because it fell under this category. It is not surprising, then, that the meetings of Christians should be considered as belonging to the same dangerous class (ἑταιρείαι — "hetaeriæ"), and that governors in the provinces were rigid in enforcing the law, especially where the popular rage was excited, as it often was, against the Christians. Some of the governors, however, as appears from the famous letter of Pliny the Younger, the nephew of the natural historian, were in doubt as to the measures that should be, or had been, taken against the Christians. Having been appointed governor of Bithynia and Pontus by his friend

and sovereign he found himself in perplexity on this point, and wrote to Rome for instructions (*Ep.* x. 97). The following is extracted:—

"With those who were informed against as Christians I have observed the following procedure. I have asked them whether they were Christians. When they answered in the affirmative, I have repeated the question a second and a third time, threatening them with the punishment of death. Those who persisted in their confession I commanded to be led to execution; for I was decidedly of opinion that, whatever might be said of the substance of their confession, punishment ought to be inflicted for their pertinacity and unbending obstinacity (*pertinacia et inflexibilis obstinatio*). Some of these infatuated persons, however, because they were Roman citizens, I have ordered to be sent to the capital. The crime has appeared in various forms. There was an anonymous writing laid before me, which contained the names of many who denied that they were Christians, or ever had been. When these persons, following my example, invoked the gods, and offered wine and incense to thy image, and, moreover, cursed Christ, which those who are really Christians never can be brought to do, then I thought it right to dismiss them. Others, who had been denounced by informers, declared that they were Christians, but soon after denied it. They had been formerly Christians, but they had ceased to be so, some for several years, some even for twenty. These all adored thy image and the images of the gods, and cursed Christ. It appears that they come together on a certain day before sunrise, and sing a hymn to Christ as to a god, then bind themselves by an oath not to steal, not to commit adultery, to keep their word, and not to deny property entrusted to them when it is demanded back. To attain the greater certainty, I have thought it necessary to examine two women who are called *ministræ* (deaconesses) by torture. I have found nothing but a perverse, extravagant superstition. Therefore I have postponed further inquiry, and have resolved to consult thee, for such a course seemed desirable, especially on account of the numbers of those who are in danger. For many of every age and rank, and of both sexes, are involved. The contagion has spread not only in the cities, but in the

villages and country districts. It seems, however, that it may be possible to check and subdue it. This, at least, is matter of fact, that temples long forsaken are beginning to be again visited, ceremonies long discontinued are again observed, and beasts of sacrifice, which formerly could hardly find a buyer, are again sold. From this it may be inferred what a multitude may yet be reclaimed if space be allowed for repentance."

In this letter Pliny also stated that the Christians who, after taking the oath on the morning of the stated day, had dispersed, and then reassembled later for the enjoyment of a simple and innocent meal, had given up the latter meetings in obedience to the imperial edict against hetæriæ.

Neander notices that in Pliny there is, at least, greater freedom and impartiality of judgment than in his friend Tacitus, who speaks of Christianity as an *exitiabilis superstitio*, and of the Christians as *homines per flagitia invisos*. Pliny, who made some inquiry into facts, testifies against the *flagitia*, sees in the Christians the victims of a "gloomy pietism," and, though he feels it necessary to do something for the vindication of imperial laws, gives indications of humanity and commiseration, which are entirely wanting in the historian's account of the barbarous and wanton persecution under Nero.

The Emperor expressed his approval of the course which Pliny had followed. Those who had been denounced and convicted, he said, must be punished if they did not repent. But Christians were not to be sought out: they were not to be treated as ordinary criminals, for whom search was made by the police (*εἰρηνάρχοι*). By this rescript of Trajan (110 A.D.), according to some, Christianity was for the first time expressly declared to be illegal. When it had previously been persecuted, it was because it was "tacitly" classed with *religiones illicitæ*.

Tertullian, speaking of this rescript, puts Trajan on the horns of a dilemma. If the Emperor thought the Christians criminals, they should in all cases be punished; if he thought them innocent, punishment was in all cases unjust. *O sententiam, necessitate confusam*—"Oh decree, confounded by embarrassing circumstances." Some of the most recent

historians continue to represent it as not only unrighteous, but inconsistent with itself. Even Mr. Gibbon, to go back from the most recent historians to one who was not disposed to speak unfavourably of the persecutor, or too favourably of the persecuted—makes the charge of inconsistency—in language, however, that takes off its edge: "Though he directs the magistrates to punish such persons as are legally convicted, he prohibits them, with a very humane inconsistency, from making any inquiries concerning the supposed criminals."

We must all deplore Trajan's and Pliny's ignorance and unbelief, and we may use the strongest language in condemning them. No one, in short, will think of vindicating their persecution of the Christians. But the charge of inconsistency does not appear unanswerable. In many cases, and especially when crimes, or so-called crimes, are committed on a large scale, the infliction of punishment becomes a question not only of morals or, if you will, of justice, but of policy. Besides, there is great force in the distinction which some have pointed out in Trajan's favour—the distinction between open contempt and defiance of the law and such unlawful conduct as attracts no public notice. All the more, however, do we deplore and condemn the Emperor's blindness in this matter, for those who were the very salt of the earth would be the first pronounced guilty of open "contempt and defiance," and we cannot but recall the words: "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness." We cannot but reflect that a good conscience, in the truest and fullest sense of the expression, is more than an approving conscience: it is a conscience enlightened according to the everlasting will of God.

The letter of Pliny, we may notice, is exceedingly important in another respect. The document contains the earliest information we possess as to the worship observed by the Christians on the first day of the week.

1. From the confession which was made to him, the governor of Bithynia and Pontus ascertained that the Christians were wont to meet *stato die*, which could be no other than the first day of the week. "We assemble on the Sunday,"[1] said Justin

[1] Called sometimes the "first day," sometimes the "eighth day" (Barnabas).

Martyr soon after, "because it was the day on which God created the world, dispersing the darkness, and because on the same day our Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead." I need hardly remind you that the change of the day of rest is based on no formal positive command. We find, however, traces of the observance of the Christian Sabbath in the Acts of the Apostles (xx. 7). In the New Testament there are other indications (1 Cor. xvi. 2) of the observance of the first day of the week. Of these, the most important is the expression in the Apocalypse: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day," which is commonly, though not universally, understood as an expression, and an expression then become usual, for the first day of the week, like the *status dies* of Pliny's letter. At the same time, these indications, while they show that the Christians had begun from the earliest times to observe the first day of the week, by no means prove that, from a period as early, they had ceased to observe the seventh. We know that the Jewish Christians, at least, did not all at once forsake the temple and the synagogue, and therefore we may say with little hesitation with regard to the day of rest, as with regard to many things besides, that the new was for a while present before the old disappeared.

2. This document contains the first distinct and unquestionable proof that song formed a part of Divine worship in the ancient assemblies. The presumption undoubtedly is, that it was no innovation; at the same time, there is no explicit mention of it in the New Testament. It is an inference, safe and natural it may be, but still only an inference, that, if Christians were exhorted to edify one another in their private intercourse by "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs," much more may we believe that they would do so, and would need no exhortation to do so, when they met for public worship.

3. We learn also from this document, the first that speaks explicitly of praise in the Church, that Christ was celebrated and invoked by the worshippers as Divine.[1]

[1] [Cardinal Newman takes *carmen* to mean something like "incantation." After giving instances that show that the Christians were regarded as a kind of sorcerers, he says: "When he (Pliny) speaks of the Christians 'saying with

4. Further, it is a probable conclusion from Pliny's language that there were at this time deaconesses in the Church—women who assisted the deacons in taking charge of the poor and sick. The two women examined by the governor were called among their own people *ministræ*. This appears to many to be introduced as a name of office, and is adduced along with other evidence older and higher still, particularly Rom. xvi. 1,[1] to show that the order of deaconesses was an ancient Christian institution.

5. There is still another important point to be noticed. The communion appears to have been observed at the second meeting, held in the evening, and it seems to have been observed in connection with the *Agapæ*—the "love-feasts"—which were also an ancient Christian institution, but which, in course of time, owing to gross abuses, it was deemed wise to abolish. And this raises the question: "Are we not warranted in considering all merely ecclesiastical institutions—all institutions, that is, that do not rest on express Divine command—in the light of reason and experience; and should we not, while touching none of them with a rash hand, abrogate such as have become a hindrance, rather than a help, to the cause of Christ?"

The Church, we have just seen, undoubtedly dealt thus with an institution that reached back into the apostolic age. Even in that age it had begun to be attended with serious evils, but it had not been swept away, as it had not been created, by apostolic authority. That the Christians met in the evening not simply for the observance of the communion, but for a meal, is plain from the expression used by Pliny: *Ad capiendum cibum, promiscuum tamen et innoxium*—"To take a meal—one shared by all, however, and harmless."

The persecution under Trajan was by no means confined to Bithynia and Pontus. The martyr's crown was won by many whose witness is on high, and whose record is in heaven. The two most illustrious of the victims mentioned

one another a *carmen* to Christ as to a god,' he meant pretty much what Suetonius expresses by the *maleficæ superstitio*."—*Development of Christian Doctrine*, p. 230.]

[1] "I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant (διάκονον) of the church which is at Cenchrea."

in history were Symeon, Bishop or Overseer of the Church of Jerusalem, and Ignatius, the so-called Bishop of Antioch, who indeed, we may mention in connection with a point just considered, is said to have introduced "antiphonies" in the celebration of Divine praise. As Ignatius, however, occupies a large space in Church History, a word may be said at present on Symeon.

Instead of James, the Lord's brother, who suffered martyrdom a few years before the great catastrophe of the year 70 A.D., Symeon became overseer of the mother-church. According to a legend found in Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.* iii. 11): "The apostles and original disciples of Christ, as many of them as were still alive, assembled in Jerusalem from all parts, and in company with the kinsmen of Jesus according to the flesh, of whom several still remained, considered the question, Who was worthy to succeed James the Just? Symeon, son of Cleophas, was unanimously pronounced the most suitable for the high position, as he was a cousin of the Redeemer."

There are other accounts, referred to by the same historian (iii. 32, iv. 22), which, without legendary embellishment, or, at all events, with less of it, state that the successor of James, the Lord's brother, was Symeon, likewise a kinsman of the Redeemer, and the son of Cleophas. We have no right to suppose that Symeon was in any respect unworthy of the exalted office, but it is evident that the natural relationship to the Lord was a consideration that had very great weight, and this has been regarded by some as a visible trace of the Judaising spirit which was still prevalent in the parent community shortly before judgment was inflicted on Jerusalem. But it may almost as well be called a Hellenising or a Romanising spirit. The Jewish Christians at that election simply showed that they had affections and passions like other men, and that these sometimes influenced them unduly. How many Gentile Christians are there who have learned that they should know Christ, and all who are His, and all men, not after the flesh but after the Spirit?

Symeon, the Lord's kinsman, having become overseer of the mother church shortly before the outbreak of the Jewish War, was, as may very confidently be accepted, at the head

of those, who, about the beginning of 66 A.D., left the doomed city, and betook themselves to Pella, beyond Jordan, where, when the cloud of vengeance burst, they enjoyed a quiet resting-place under the shadow of the Almighty's wings. It is said that on the day of desolation, when the Holy City was a heap, among the few buildings that were spared was one in which the Christians had been wont to meet, and which stood on Mount Sion. In that humble habitation God's honour dwelt when His wrath fell upon the city and the temple to the uttermost. In this lowly building, which was of the future, as the temple was of the past—which represented a living worship, and not a dead ceremonial—the little flock who returned with Symeon could again praise God; and after these strange and terrible days their young men might see visions, not only of a heavenly kingdom of glory, but of a Divine kingdom upon earth more vast and lasting than the empire of triumphant Rome, whose colossal foot was now set upon their neck.

According to the most ancient testimony, the little flock was for a while infested by no grievous wolves. The Church was pure in doctrine and life. Where there was an end of the old oblations she was presented as a chaste virgin to Him who, through the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot unto God. But the serpent did enter this scene of comparative purity. Heresies, we have seen, were introduced. The old Jewish hatred flamed forth against the followers of Jesus, and Symeon seems to have been formally accused, in the time of Trajan, both as a descendant of David and as a Christian. In his case, as in that of his kinsman and Redeemer, a political as well as a religious colouring was given to the charge, which was made before the provincial government. He was accused, not only of confessing Jesus to be the Christ, but of cherishing projects of revolt and usurpation. He was put to the torture, and his trial was conducted in this way for several days. It does not appear that pity was expressed, but all present, we are told, wondered exceedingly how a man so old (his age is given as a hundred and twenty years) was able to endure so much. At length he was crucified, the year of his death being, according to Eusebius, 109 A.D. At another cross the son of Cleophas had learned how to suffer. He had learned,

too, that the truth cannot die. He had seen the little one become a thousand, and the small one a strong nation.

Ignatius stands out in church history as the most conspicuous figure after the days of the apostles. He belongs to the beginning of the second century, and is one of the so-called apostolic fathers, or immediate scholars of the apostles. Legend has carried back his history to the life of Jesus Himself, and represented him to be the child who was set in the midst of the disciples to recommend the lesson of humility. The Lord took him in His arms, and hence, it was said, he received his name of Theophorus. Another explanation of this name is given in the account of his martyrdom, which professes to be written by those who were his companions on his journey to Rome, where he was put to death, and were there the witnesses of his faith and constancy; and this account, at all events, bears the stamp of an earlier date than can be given to the legend that identifies him with the child set by Jesus in the midst of the Twelve.

Ignatius is said to have been instructed, or more perfectly instructed, in the way of salvation by John, and to have succeeded Peter in the bishopric of Antioch, receiving ordination from one of the two great apostles—either from the apostle of the circumcision or from the apostle of the uncircumcision. He was, we know, Bishop of Antioch, and when he was in that city, where the disciples were first called Christians, an innovation was made in the service of praise—antiphonal singing, namely, which was known among the Jews in ancient times, and appears to have been practised by the Essenes. When this mode of singing was introduced, its chief and most powerful recommendation was the authority of Ignatius, who, according to the legend, was favoured with a vision in which antiphonal chanting was heard; the division of the singers into bands which answered each other was an imitation of the worship of the Seraphim. The practice spread widely and rapidly, as is evident from the letter of Pliny, in which the Christians are said to sing a hymn to Christ as God, *secum invicem*—"by turns among themselves."

For about forty years Ignatius had filled his office, escaping the storms that raged in the time of Domitian, when at length the Emperor Trajan, who was on an expedition against the

Parthians, came to Antioch. The exact date of this imperial visit, or, as we should rather say, of the martyrdom of this apostolic father, is uncertain. The most commonly received date is 115 or 116 A.D. When, according to the "Account," Trajan was compelling all who lived godly lives either to sacrifice to idols or to die, the noble soldier of Christ, being in fear for the church of the Antiochians, was, in accordance with his own desire, brought before the Emperor. And that prince said unto him, "Who art thou, wicked demon, that settest thyself to transgress our commands, and persuadest others to do the same, so that they should miserably perish?" Ignatius replied, "No one ought to call Theophorus wicked, for all evil spirits have departed from the servants of God. Inasmuch as I have Christ the King of Heaven within me, I destroy all other devils." Trajan answered, "And who is Theophorus?" Ignatius replied, "He who has Christ within his breast." Trajan said, "Do we not then seem to you to have the gods in our mind, whose assistance we enjoy in fighting against our enemies?" Ignatius answered, "Thou art in error when thou callest the demons of the nations gods. For there is but one God, who made heaven and earth, and the sea and all that are in them, and one Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, whose Kingdom may I enjoy!" Trajan said, "Do you mean Him who was crucified under Pontius Pilate?" Ignatius replied, "I mean Him who crucified my sin with him who was the inventor of it, and who has condemned (and cast down) all the deceit and malice of the devil under the feet of those who carry Him in their heart." Trajan said, "Dost thou then carry within thee Him that was crucified?" Ignatius replied, "Truly so; for it is written, I will dwell in them, and walk in them." Then Trajan pronounced sentence as follows: "We command that Ignatius, who affirms that he carries about with him Him that was crucified, be bound by soldiers, and carried to the great Rome, there to be devoured by the beasts, for the gratification of the people."

When the holy martyr heard his sentence, he cried out with joy, "I thank Thee, O Lord, that Thou hast vouchsafed to honour me with a perfect love toward Thee, and hast made me to be bound with iron chains, like Thy apostle Paul."

When he had first prayed for the Church, and commended it, with tears, to the Lord, he was hurried away, a chosen victim, by the savage soldiers, that he might be carried to Rome, there to furnish food to the bloodthirsty beasts.

There is nothing in the seven epistles which in antiquity were unanimously ascribed to Ignatius, about this dialogue with Trajan, and the sentence pronounced by the Emperor's own lips. The probability is that the sentence was pronounced by the Governor of Syria, and was, as appears from the letters and other sources, and not merely from that "Account," that he should be cast to the wild beasts at Rome. But doubt has been raised as to whether any such sentence was ever pronounced; and though no one, as far as I know, has ever denied that Ignatius suffered martyrdom, Baur has taken the position that he was never formally tried, but that, on the occasion of an earthquake which broke out at Antioch, he fell a victim to the popular fury. The letters and the Roman journey and the martyrdom are all pure invention.

It may be asked on the one side: "Why should a Roman governor send a man who was considered a fanatic all the way to Rome with such circumstance, when his execution at Antioch was not only a simpler matter, but more likely to have a deterrent effect on the Christians there?" But, it may be argued on the other hand, a governor might be afraid of provoking the fanaticism of the Christians of Antioch by the execution of their bishop in the midst of them; or if we may suppose the governor to have had some mercy in his nature, even in such a degree as Trajan and Pliny indicate in their correspondence, he might hope that the arduous journey would cool the captive's zeal, and bring him to a denial of his faith; or, if we suppose that the governor considered the question how he could strike terror into the heart of the greatest number, there were multitudes of Christians on the way who might be intimidated by the spectacle of the sufferer, though the sufferer himself reckoned the links of his chain as so many jewels. Moreover, it would appear that, about the beginning of the second century, the time of the martyrdom of Ignatius, it began to be a customary thing with provincial governors that courted the populace of any great city, and above all of the capital, to send persons under

sentence as victims for the games. To such extent was this practice carried that, in the following century, it was found necessary to restrain the transportation of condemned persons by a law which forbade it to take place without the previous authorisation of the Emperor. There is, therefore, nothing improbable in the received account of the sentence passed on Ignatius.

Guarded by ten soldiers, the Bishop of Antioch embarked at Seleucia. When he came to Smyrna, where he met with Polycarp, who, like himself, had sat at the feet of the beloved disciple, ambassadors from different churches of Asia Minor presented themselves before the prisoner, who asked their love and intercession, and some of them accompanied him through the peninsula. Possibly—for it was in the spirit of these early times, when the tie of discipleship was more strongly felt than it can be in our day—they would have shown him such a mark of affection and honour had he been no captive; but, with a touching emulation, the partners of the blessed hope everywhere sought to sweeten the last days of one who was counted worthy to suffer unto death.

The seven letters written on this journey, if we accept them as genuine, as most do, in the shorter recension of them, were addressed to the Ephesians, Magnesians, Trallians, Philadelphians, Smyrnæans, Romans, and to Polycarp. Now, that in certain cases a Roman prisoner might have such a measure of freedom as to receive deputations and write epistles, we learn, not only from the Acts of the Apostles and other historical books, but from a work of fiction that appeared about the middle of the second century. Lucian's philosophical adventurer, Peregrinus Proteus, is represented as having been for a while a Christian. Of course he was many things besides, as the name Proteus indicates. When a prisoner in Palestine, he receives embassies from communities of Asiatic believers, and writes letters to a great many famous cities. It is not impossible, indeed, that such strokes in the picture of Peregrinus, while they throw light on the "free custody" (*libera custodia*) frequently enjoyed by Roman captives, were suggested by the history of Ignatius. In one of those epistles (that to the Romans) he speaks as a man who

realises the glory and blessedness of martyrdom. "It is good," he says, "to set from the world to God, that I may rise again to Him: the nearer the sword, the nearer heaven;" and, while he thus speaks, he entreats his friends in the capital to make no application to the Emperor on his behalf. In the epistles generally, too, there is many a note of triumph, and many a glowing exhortation, coming from the heart of a man who, on the threshold of the grave, felt that the one burning question for every man was whether he was indeed a Θεοφόρος —whether he bore the Lord in his soul. There were two kinds of coin, he said—God's and the world's; and the former was known by the image and superscription of the Saviour, which was just the Christian love by which faith wrought. He was so in love with his Church, his jewels, that he felt as if the being bound for his Master were the beginning of true discipleship. "Now," says he, "I begin to be a disciple." And yet he does not deny that many might be such as he was, or better than he was, without these bonds. There is nothing in the letters that can properly be called theology, though the fundamental verities of the faith are not merely implied but expressed. What characterises them above all is personal love to Christ. He is all in all. To Him he lives. "My love is crucified, and there is no fire in me desiring to be fed." It is easy to accuse the writer of extravagance in the language he uses on several points, but think of the changing scenes through which he passed, "bound to ten leopards," as he called the soldiers that kept him—the vision of the martyr's crown beckoning him onward; and sometimes, it may be, the natural love of life, and the remembrance of Antioch and the Orontes, holding him back; and the agitation arising from those embassies of fellow-disciples, whose homage, sometimes incautious and excessive, was indeed not unattended with spiritual danger. "They that speak to me," he himself said, feeling the excitement, and not unconscious of the danger, "scourge me, for I do indeed desire to suffer, but I know not if I be worthy to do so." Let us think of these things, and if we still speak of extravagance when we recall the words of truth and soberness which the Apostle of the Gentiles, ardent and devoted as he was, continued to use in all the way by which he was led; yet it is by no means

wonderful, and by no means unnatural, and is a proof for, rather than against, the genuineness of the letters. In one of them, it may be added, he speaks of himself as the grain which should be crushed and, as it were, ground by the teeth of wild beasts, that it might become pure heavenly bread.

And so it befell Ignatius; he was torn in pieces. But before the captive became, in his own words, "Christ's freedman," he met in Rome some Christians of Antioch who had hastened before him, and with them and many other brethren he kneeled down and prayed for God's mercy on the persecuted Church.

On the view even of the most destructive school, Ignatius was a martyr, and the seven letters are a monument of Christian piety and Christian thought in ancient times. Some points are particularly to be noticed.

1. Ignatius combats those who adhere to Jewish ordinances. And here may be mentioned a point in connection with the *status dies* of Pliny's letter. Ignatius says that Christians no longer observe the Sabbath, but live in the observance of the Lord's Day.

2. Still more earnestly he sets himself in opposition to those who, misunderstanding the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ, denied His true humanity, and maintained that, instead of a real He possessed only a seeming human body (Docetæ). Although the heresy has been so long exploded, I may quote one passage from the Epistle to the Smyrnæans (ch. iv.): "I guard you beforehand from those beasts in the shape of men, whom you must not only not receive, but, if it be possible, not even meet with; only you must pray to God for them, if by any means they may be brought to repentance, which, however, will be very difficult. Yet Jesus Christ, who is our true life, has the power of effecting this. But if these things were done by our Lord only in appearance, then am I also only in appearance bound. And why have I also surrendered myself to death, to fire, to the sword, to wild beasts?"

3. The name which Ignatius has in ecclesiastical history he owes mainly, not to his martyrdom, or to the fervent evangelical piety of his letters, but to the fact that he stands forth as the earliest champion of the idea of the Episcopate. As appears from the preceding remarks, he felt himself called

upon to lift up his voice against heresies, one of which, at least, he held to be utterly subversive of the true faith. But let heresy enter in and prevail, and immediately the unity of the Church is emphasised, and it becomes most natural to attach great importance to everything that represents, or is supposed to represent, that unity. Ignatius saw it represented in the bishop, and he speaks of the bishop's dignity and authority in no measured terms. He by no means withholds honour from the body of presbyters in any religious community. The body of elders which he calls the presbytery are spoken of as an apostolic company, and described as the Sanhedrim of God; "but," says he to the Ephesians, "your justly renowned presbytery is fitted as exactly to the bishop as the strings are to the harp;" and he says to the Magnesians: "Your bishop presides in the place of God, and your presbyters in place of the assembly of the apostles. Ye are nothing without your bishop." To the Smyrnæans he says: "It is well to reverence both God and the bishop." In one place he expresses the opinion that members of the Church should not marry without having first obtained the approval of the bishop, and in another he uses remarkable language of the man who chooses to remain in celibacy, as a way of life necessarily agreeable to God: "If he begins to boast, he is undone; if he reckon himself greater than the bishop, he is ruined."

Other passages might be quoted that show not only that a distinction, unknown in the apostolic age, between the names "bishop" and "presbyter" was already known, but that, in this writer at least, there was a disposition to widen the distance to the utmost. That passages in letters alleged to have been written at so early a period should take a tone so decidedly different from that of the New Testament has proved a stumbling-block to many, and on this ground chiefly, though not solely, their genuineness has been questioned, and they have been regarded as the product of a later time, when the hierarchical tendency had been much further developed. Now, it cannot be denied that the language of Ignatius is somewhat startling as compared not only with that of the apostles, but with that of Clemens Romanus. Let it be borne in mind, however, that in the East, where, at this time,

dangerous heresies chiefly prevailed, there would be most strongly felt the craving for a visible representation of the Church's unity in a man of authority, who enjoyed the confidence of the people, and had been for this reason raised to the post. Probably the writings of the New Testament were not yet collected: most certainly they were not in many hands. All the more naturally would a Christian community fall back upon its chief, who was originally *primus inter pares*,—the most influential of the presbyters,—and they would magnify his office, erecting it, as he would be sufficiently prone to do himself, as walls and bulwarks against the assaults of the heretics. Some defenders of the letters, indeed, who are by no means favourable to episcopal domination, turn the edge of the argument the other way. The extravagant terms in which the office of bishop is extolled, so far from being a proof of spuriousness or interpolation, are a clear indication that the episcopate was of recent date, and stood in great need of support. Whatever force there may be in this consideration, there are two points of a negative kind in favour of the genuineness that deserve special notice.

a. There is no trace in these letters of episcopal authority extending beyond a single community of believers. By a single community I mean the community in one place, as in Ephesus or in Smyrna. While the word ἐκκλησία is, of course, practically applied to such a society, there is no clear evidence that buildings were anywhere erected for Christian worship before the third century; and it is easy to understand that a body of presbyters and their chief would realise and maintain their oneness, and the oneness of the flock over which they were set, more easily when numerous rooms in private houses, frequently changed, were used, than if they had been accustomed to meet in edifices such as we call churches.

b. In Ignatius the episcopal dignity is not made to rest on the ground on which it was soon afterwards to rest, and on which it is defended to the present day. In these letters it is not the bishops, but the presbyters, who appear as the successors and representatives of the apostles. The former are conceived of as being, in a sense in which the latter

are not, the successors and representatives of Christ—an idea that may be characterised as both false and carnal, and which may have existed in the community of Jerusalem when, in electing to the episcopal office, it evinced a preference for kinsmen of the Redeemer according to the flesh.

4. Ignatius is appealed to by Roman Catholics as the most eminent witness, after New Testament writers, to the doctrine of transubstantiation. Several passages are referred to, especially the letter to the Smyrnæans: "They (Docetæ) abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer, because they confess not the Eucharist to be the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins, and which the Father, of His goodness, raised again." Of course there are two questions to be put here: "Did Ignatius really mean that the bread and wine are essentially changed? And, if he did, would his words be authoritative?"

Of the seven Epistles acknowledged by Eusebius we have two Greek recensions, a longer and a shorter, of which the latter is generally accepted as genuine. I may say, however, that, instead of the passage last quoted on the Eucharist, I should prefer what we find in the larger recension at the same place, the beginning of the seventh chapter: "They are ashamed of the Cross; they mock at the Passion; they jest at the Resurrection."[1]

The exaltation of the bishop in these ancient documents, we may easily say now, was most dangerous as well as unscriptural. Let us bear in mind, however, that the bishop there magnified is not yet surrounded with earthly greatness or pomp, and that he is viewed not merely as the representative of Christ but as the representative of all that are truly godly in the flock. Nevertheless, we have here the germ of the hierarchy. The idea of the pyramid with its apex will develop itself. The craving for unity and authority against

[1] A Syriac version of three of the Epistles—those to Polycarp, the Romans, and the Ephesians—was discovered between the years 1838 and 1842 A.D., and published in 1845 by Dr. Cureton, of the British Museum. They had been brought from the monastery of Mary Deipara, in the desert of Nitria in Egypt. Some accept this version as alone genuine, but others have little hesitation in speaking of it as a harsh epitome, a colourless abridgment.

division and heresy will continue to be felt, and in process of time we shall have the one great pyramid whose base is the Christian world and whose summit is the universal bishop, the successor of Peter in the city where Ignatius won a nobler crown than any potentate, temporal or spiritual, can wear on earth.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE CHRISTIANS, THE JEWS, AND THE ROMAN POWER—FROM HADRIAN TO MARCUS AURELIUS.

UNDER Ælius Hadrianus, who succeeded Trajan in A.D. 117 and reigned till A.D. 138, the provincial governors exercised, with greater or less vigour, the power of persecuting the Christians with which they were armed by the imperial rescript of A.D. 110. They put it in force partly as circumstances suggested and partly as their own disposition prompted them. Some of them were carried away to the most violent measures by the wild cry of the populace, whose unbridled fury against the new sect, which sought to rob them not only of their gods but of what they valued not less, —their amusements,—it was difficult to resist, especially at the time of public festivities, when, in their passion for bloody spectacles, they shouted "Christianos ad leones!" It seems, however, that the rulers did not all comply with the murderous demand of the excited multitude. It is related that a proconsul of Asia Minor, Serenius Granianus, applied in writing to the Emperor, representing to him how unreasonable it was that men should be devoted to death who had not been convicted after regular trial. Hadrian felt the justice of the application and commanded the successor of Serenius Granianus—Minucius Fundanus—to take measures for the protection of the Christians against the tumultuary proceedings of the multitude, and to inflict punishment only on those of their number who were formally accused and condemned. The terms of the enactment are as follows:—

"Si quis igitur accusat et probat, adversus leges quidcunque agere memoratos homines (Christianos) pro merito peccatorum etiam supplicia statues. Illud mehercule magnopere curabis, ut siquis calumniæ gratia quemquam horum postulaverit

reum, in hunc pro suæ nequitiæ suppliciis severioribus vindices."[1]

A Roman author (Lampridius) has even stated that Hadrian intended to receive Christ among the gods and erect a temple for His worship. It is probable enough that the Emperor's ideas of Christianity were extremely confused, but the design attributed to him is by most considered scarcely credible, and the supposition that he entertained it may have originated in the circumstance that he caused temples to be erected in various places of the Empire without the statue of a god.

During the long reign of Hadrian the Roman world was disturbed by only one war. It was with the Jews. Gibbon has a strong passage on that race, and he closes it with a sentence on the war. "From the reign of Nero," he says (ch. xvi.), "to that of Antoninus Pius, the Jews discovered a fierce impatience of the dominion of Rome, which repeatedly broke out in the most furious massacres and insurrections. Humanity is shocked at the recital of the horrid cruelties which they committed in the cities of Egypt, of Cyprus, and of Cyrene, where they dwelt in treacherous friendship with the unsuspecting natives; and we are tempted to applaud the severe retaliation which was exercised by the arms of the legions against a race of fanatics, whose dire and credulous superstitions seemed to render them the implacable enemies, not only of the Roman government but of human kind. The enthusiasm of the Jews was supported by the opinion that it was unlawful for them to pay taxes to an idolatrous master; and by the flattering promise which they derived from their ancient oracles, that a conquering Messiah would soon arrive, destined to break their fetters, and to invest the favourites of heaven with the empire of earth. It was by announcing himself as their long expected deliverer, and by calling on all descendants of Abraham to assert the hope of Israel, that the famous Barcochbas collected a formidable

[1] ["If any one, therefore, makes the accusation, and proves, that the men spoken of (the Christians) do anything contrary to the laws, thou shalt decree punishment befitting their offences. But thou wilt take right good care that, if any one bring an accusation against one of these men in bad faith, thou inflict on him very severe punishment."]

army, with which he resisted during two years the power of the Emperor Hadrian."

The well known prophecy of Balaam (Num. xxiv. 17): "I shall see Him, but not now: I shall behold Him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Seth"—this prophecy took a fearful hold on the mind of an enthusiast, who, believing that the time was come and that he himself was the man destined to fulfil it, took the name Barcochba, the "Son of the Star," and, at a mountain fortress called Bethar, not far from Jerusalem, had himself anointed king, and made war upon all in the land who refused to render him homage, especially upon the Christians. He entered the holy city with an armed force and destroyed the temple of Jupiter, which had been erected where once the temple of Jehovah had stood. So alarming was the rising that the Emperor's ablest general, Julius Severus, was sent to accomplish a task to which the Governor of the province, Tcinius Annus Rufus, was unequal; and in the year 135 A.D. this general quelled the revolt, which had lasted for more than two years, and which, according to the statement of Dion, commonly accepted had cost five hundred and eighty thousand Jews their lives, this number not including those who perished by famine, disease, and fire. Into the camp of the Romans was borne from the battlefield the head of Barcochba, whom his surviving and undeceived followers now called Barcosiba, the "Son of Falsehood." Many of the Jews were sold at the terebinth at Hebron at the price of horses, and many were brought under the hammer at Gaza. Jerusalem was rebuilt: and, in honour of the Emperor and of Jupiter Capitolinus, it was called Ælia Capitolina. A statue of Jupiter and a temple of Venus were erected on Golgotha. The holy city was peopled with pagan colonists, and no Jew was permitted to approach it within a distance of several leagues. The abomination of desolation was complete, and the chosen people, who had preferred a succession of murderers to the Lord's Anointed, were to the last degree held in derision when a marble swine was set up, as it is said to have been, over one of the gates. The Christians who continued to live or who came to settle in Jerusalem

could expect toleration only by renouncing Judaism entirely and manifestly; and Eusebius relates that, at this turning-point of their history, a Gentile named Marcus was chosen to succeed James and Symeon.[1]

Hadrian, whose hand had been laid so heavily on the rebellious Jews, but who had restrained in some degree the unrighteous persecution of the Christians by the instructions which he sent to the governors of the provinces, was succeeded by his adopted son, Titus Ælius Hadrianus Antoninus Pius, in the year 138 A.D. This sovereign has often been compared with Numa, but, as Gibbon observes, his "situation opened a much larger field for the exercise of those virtues" (the love of religion, justice, peace, which characterised both princes). "Numa could only prevent a few neighbouring villages from plundering each other's harvests. Antoninus diffused order and tranquillity over the greatest part of the earth. His reign is marked by the rare advantage of furnishing very few materials for history, which is indeed little more than the register of the crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind" (ch. iii.). While he interested himself in the humblest of the people, the slaves, the widows and orphans, and the poor and oppressed in general, and acted upon the principle that it was better to preserve the life of a single citizen than to kill a thousand enemies, it is recorded of him —what can by no means be said of all the emperors described as having been of virtuous and noble nature—that he showed himself mildly, if not favourably, disposed towards the Christians; and this disposition was shown at a time when the popular fury most loudly and urgently demanded their death on account of an earthquake, an inundation of the Tiber, several conflagrations, and other calamities, which were regarded as judgments of the gods, inflicted because men who denied their existence were permitted to live in the Empire. "Away with the atheists" was the cry, "who have neither altar nor temple, and adore only the clouds!" In a persecution which arose in Greece on occasion of such calamities, Publius, the Bishop of Athens, lost his life. The Emperor sent rescripts to this city, and to other cities of that country, with the view of restraining the irrational violence of the

[1] Between Symeon and Marcus there were thirteen overseers.

multitude. In like manner, he is reported to have sent an edict to the Asiatic States. There is not sufficient reason to question the fact, but the text of the edict, as preserved by Eusebius and Justin Martyr, is generally and with good cause believed to be either forged or greatly interpolated (*Eus.* iv. 13). Among other things, the Emperor says in this edict: "By persecution you confirm the Christians in their opinions, and they cannot but desire to show, when they are accused, that they prefer death to life for the sake of their God. As to the earthquakes, you may take an example from the Christians, who show the greatest trust in their Divinity while you neglect the service of your gods. My father has already forbidden this sort of persecution, and I follow herein his principles. If any persist in molesting these people, let the accused be acquitted, though they be Christians, if they have committed no crime against the State, and let the informers be punished."[1]

This is certainly not a correct statement of his father's principles, and it is doubtful whether it be a perfectly correct statement of his own (*Eus.* iv. 26). Melito of Sardis, in writing to Marcus Aurelius, appeals to his father's edict *περὶ τοῦ μηδὲν νεωτερίζειν περὶ ἡμῶν* ["concerning not taking any new movement with respect to us"], from which we must conclude that Titus Antoninus simply wrote to protect the Christians from the rage of the populace, and, at the most, to recommend leniency toward them when it would be exercised consistently with Trajan's rescript. In a note to the edition of Eusebius now before me[2] it is with some reason remarked that the historian, in inserting this edict, "graviter hallucinari."

Persecution broke forth anew most violently under the second Antonine, Marcus Aurelius, who succeeded Titus, and reigned from 161 to 180 A.D.

Historians, civil and ecclesiastical, vie with one another in pronouncing eulogiums on the character and administration of this Emperor as long as they can leave out of view his treatment of the Christians. Marcus Aurelius had been well trained from his earliest youth. At the age of twelve he

[1] *ὑπὲρ δὲ τῶν τοιούτων, ἤδη καὶ πολλοὶ τῶν περὶ τὰς ἐπαρχίας ἡγεμόνων καὶ τῷ θειοτάτῳ ἡμῶν ἔγραψαν πατρί. οἷς καὶ ἀντ' ἐγραψε μηδὲν ἐνόχλειν τοῖς τοιούτοις, εἰ μὴ φαίνοιντό τι περὶ τὴν Ῥωμαίων ἡγεμονίαν ἐγχειροῦντες.*

[2] [Heinichen's.]

embraced the severe system of the Stoics, and all his life he continued to cultivate wisdom and self-control. In the midst of arms, when he was defending the empire against external enemies, it was still his aim to subdue the foe within his own breast—"to subject his passions to his reason, to consider virtue as the only good, vice as the only evil." The virtuous character by which he is so generally said to have been pre-eminently distinguished was, according to Gibbon, "the well-earned harvest of many a learned conference, of many a patient lecture, and many a midnight lucubration." In short, it appears from all accounts that, as touching the law of God, as it was understood by the Stoic, than who none except the Christian understood it better, he was blameless. Not that he was absolutely perfect. Even Gibbon (ch. iv.) blames him for the excessive though amiable mildness of his nature, which the rigid discipline of the Stoics was unable to eradicate, and for the unsuspecting goodness of his heart, which frequently made him a dupe though he was a man of excellent understanding. "Artful men," says he, "who study the passions of princes, and conceal their own, approached his person in the disguise of a philosophic sanctity, and acquired riches and honours by affecting to despise them." There were, then, avenues of evil into that heart, and we know that the arch-enemy, on the one hand, like faith on the other, sometimes enters in with great power by an avenue no wider than a needle's eye. While we leave the general character of Marcus Aurelius unassailed, we have the right to say that many a sufferer that had been taught in a better school than his sought refuge from this best of princes, who is described as too mild and merciful, and could find refuge from this man, the highest on earth, only in Him whose mercy is in the heavens and whose righteousness, at the same time, is like the great mountains.

What Gibbon says of those "artful men who study the passions of princes, and conceal their own," already prepares us in some degree for answering the question, which has often been put: "How could this man, when the most bloody persecutions that history had known broke out in Asia Minor and Gaul, be found at the head of those who wasted, and sought to destroy, the Church, instead of imitating the

example of his illustrious father, who had put forth his power with much success to restrain and silence pagan fanaticism? Nay, why did a man of his moral earnestness, and one whose principles were in many points akin to Christianity, fail not merely to frown down the passionate excitement that demanded the Christians as its victims, but to make himself acquainted with the real tenets of the new sect and embrace them?"

1. I remark that, under the comparatively mild sway of his immediate predecessors, Christianity had continued to spread, and had spread to such a degree as to excite real alarm in the minds of influential classes. Call to remembrance the feelings which stirred Demetrius and the craftsmen of like occupation at Ephesus, and imagine the same selfish and furious opposition on a world-wide scale. Substitute for the makers of little portable shrines the architects of temples which, it was hoped, would be the admiration and pride of nations; and number in their train not only sculptors and painters, but a multitude of mechanics who must have work if they were to have food, and who saw no prospect of obtaining employment from the Christians, for whose abominable worship no buildings, great or small, had as yet been erected; not to speak of the priests of every name and order, or of the passion of the people for their amusements, so often denounced by the Christians, or of the multitude that depended for their living on the gratification of that passion —not to speak of these and many other classes, think of the pagan schoolmaster, who found that he was a dangerous man —that there were people that would not put their own children, and dissuaded others from putting theirs, under his care. Would he not instil the most bitter and contemptuous prejudice into those who were entrusted to him? It is not usually on their first promulgation, but a generation or two later, that the professors and advocates of new principles find it most difficult to obtain a hearing. There was in many an indisposition to inquire what Christianity really was, or on what evidence it rested. The knowledge even of Celsus was superficial.

2. While the loss of faith in the old religions prepared many for the reception of the new faith, others, especially of the higher and ruling classes, had reached such a state of

philosophical scepticism that they would not examine its claims, rejecting them *à priori* as unfounded and unworthy of attention; they would be no judges of such matters. Kind-hearted rulers who were unwilling to inflict death on a man for his religion could not, as appears from instances that have been preserved in Tertullian, express pity for the victim without at the same time implying contempt for his principles. "Save your lives;" "throw not away your lives;" "wretched men, if ye must needs die, have ye not precipices and halters that would suffice?"

3. Never were the calumnies against the Christians so wildly propagated as at the beginning of this reign, and we know that "artful men," though perhaps not the artful men of whom Gibbon speaks, poured them into the ear of the Emperor. And what were these unjust calumnies based upon? What did the enmity of the world take hold of and build upon so falsely and foully? They rested on the first principle of religion: There is one God, eternal, invisible; on the most sacred of His ordinances—that by which the death of the Redeemer was shown forth; and, thirdly, on the new commandment, the fulfilment of which would make a new world. The Christians were charged with ἀθεότης (atheism), θυεστεῖα δεῖπνα (Tertullian: *sacramentum infanticidii*), and οἰδιπόδειοι μίξεις (*concubitus incesti*), and these became by-words. Besides the language of devout Christians on the Supper, which would be seized on and perverted so as to be a foundation for this, another thing that might give rise to this calumny has been noticed by Mr. Plumptre: "To drink of human blood had actually been made, as in the conspiracy of Catiline, a bond of union in a common crime, and the blood, it was said, was that of a slaughtered child. It had entered into the popular imagination as one of the horrors of a secret conspiracy. Christians were regarded as members of a secret society, conspiring together for the downfall of the religion and polity of the Empire. It was natural to think that they had like rites of initiation."[1] In the same article is noticed the astounding and widely received charge—of course it was quite a possible thing that the most contradictory calumnies should be in circulation—that the

[1] *Dict. of Christ. Antt.* [Art. "Calumnies against the Christians."]

Christians worshipped their God under the mysterious form of a man with an ass's head. This extraordinary charge, it seems, was transferred to the Christians from the Jews, against whom it was originally brought, and there appears to be no other ground for the revolting invention than the tradition that, at the time of the Exodus, the Jews "had been led to find water through the wild asses of the desert."

4. We now come to considerations of a more personal kind. The Stoic philosophers, though many of them were most pure, held certain principles that could not but create a deep repugnance to Christianity, and these Marcus Aurelius held firmly. His philosophical resignation was very different from the sentiments with which the Christians encountered martyrdom, and he could not comprehend them. He despised the Christian's devotion and his hope of an eternal personal existence; the wise man, he held, ought to consider it a matter of indifference whether he was to live after death or not. When his end comes he should die ἀτραγῴδως, doing and saying nothing for effect, but conducting himself in a spirit as far from triumph and exaltation as from fear and trembling. The Christian's way of dying was a proof of his fanaticism. Excitement of every kind was considered an evil by the Emperor, and an edict, it is said, was issued by him commanding that all who introduced new religions, whereby the minds of men might be disquieted, should be banished or put to death. But the Christian religion not only disturbed the equipoise of the soul, on which, as a philosopher, he set so great value; it threatened the very existence of the State, of which he was the sovereign, and the preservation of which, he thought, depended on the maintenance of the old religion. It is possible, too, that he was confirmed in his hatred of the Christians by some sarcasms uttered by them before the persecution reached its worst—as, for instance, that of Tatian, who said of him that "he gave many philosophers an annual salary of six hundred gold pieces that they might not let their beard grow in vain." At all events, whether he received any provocation of this kind or not, he disliked the Christians, and not only left the popular outbursts against them unpunished, but became an active persecutor. The decided aversion to fanaticism, or what is

supposed to be fanaticism, may, it has been truly said, itself become a fanaticism; and, of all fanaticisms, the fanaticism of reason (to use a phrase that may seem self-contradictory) is not the least. Ample testimony has been borne to the many virtues of Marcus Aurelius, and, as we have seen, though not exactly in the enumeration of his virtues, to the unsuspecting goodness of his heart. But we know of another man of whom the high testimony was borne that he was good and guileless, and we hear that man, though he was himself a Galilean, say, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" We need not wonder that Marcus Aurelius, occupying a philosophical height which he accounted loftier far than the throne of the Cæsars, should put the same question. "Artful men who study the passions of princes, and conceal their own," were about the enthroned Nathanael. It is not for us to speculate what might have happened had there only been a Philip near—one who knew both Christ and this Nathanael—and had he uttered aloud words which indeed the inner voice would have spoken: "Come and see." What we do know is that Marcus Aurelius did not subject Christianity to a fair examination, and that the consequence, though it was overruled for good, was the direst persecution that had been endured from the beginning of the Church's history.

Marcus Aurelius had learned how the Christians met death when sentenced for their religion, but he ascribed their fortitude and the triumphant joy which they often showed in their last hours, not to deeply rooted and immovable conviction, but to the power of strong delusion over obstinate and refractory natures (*κατὰ ψιλὴν παράταξιν*). There is considerable evidence to show that he not only issued a general edict forbidding the introduction of new religions by which the public mind might be disturbed, which of course was interpreted and applied against the Christians, but that he sent express orders to some parts of the world that the adherents of the hated faith should be "sought out" and tried for their atheism, their unnatural feasts, and their unnatural lusts.

One of the most notable victims of the philosophical Emperor's hatred of Christianity was the most illustrious defender of the new religion that had appeared since the days

of the apostles — Justin Martyr, of whom I shall speak afterwards. At present let us look to Smyrna, and to Polycarp, the venerable disciple of the Apostle John.

An account of the martyrdom of Polycarp and its attendant circumstances has come down to us. In addition to the value it possesses intrinsically, it is interesting as the earliest of all the Martyria. There can be little doubt that, in the form in which it has come down to us, it contains numerous interpolations, and it has been noticed that, while Eusebius introduces the substance of it into his work, "some of the most startling miraculous phenomena recorded in the text as it now stands have no place in the narrative as given by that early historian of the Church." The document purports to have been written by the Church at Smyrna to the Church in Philomelium,[1] but it was an encyclical letter, intended for the widest possible circulation, and so there is added, "and to all the congregations of the holy and Catholic Church in every place."

It is said generally of the sufferers in the persecution which broke out at Smyrna in 163 or in 167 A.D.,[2] that "they reached such a pitch of magnanimity that not one of them let a sigh or a groan escape him; this proving to us all that those most holy martyrs of Christ, at the very time when they suffered such torments, were absent from the body, or rather that the Lord then stood by them and communed with them." Among those who were executed there was mentioned particularly a youth called Germanicus, who, when the proconsul besought him to take pity on his age and renounce his religion, not only refused, but provoked the wild beast that was set on against him, "being desirous to escape all the more quickly from an unrighteous and impious world." The constancy of this youth excited the multitude, and they desired to satisfy their thirst for blood by taking the life of the Bishop, who was chiefly to blame for the conversions that had taken place and for the calamities that had been inflicted by the gods. Hence, with the cry "Away with the atheists!" they joined the words, "Let Polycarp be sought out!"

Here let us notice a not unimportant point in this earliest

[1] In Phrygia. Some read, "Philadelphia." [2] Wieseler gives 165.

Martyrion. You remember that Ignatius, forty years before, wrote to the Romans imploring them to intercede neither with God nor with man for his deliverance from the death to which he had been sentenced. His language is so vehement, and in the opinion of some so offensive, that a proof has been supposed to be found in it of the spuriousness of the letters ascribed to him. Ignatius, however, had not delivered himself up to be tried, but the encyclical letter of the Church of Smyrna, before speaking of the apprehension of its Bishop, mentions the case of an apostate who, in his eagerness to win the crown of martyrdom, had not only come forward voluntarily himself, but had induced others to do so. He had not learned of Him who was meek and lowly, and who has taught us all by the history of His temptation in the wilderness that we must look for God's strength to bear us up, not when we fly giddily through the air, but only when we walk in the plain path which God in His providence traces for us. But how does the Church of Smyrna view the conduct of those who obtrude themselves in a spirit so rash and presumptuous, if not vain-glorious? Having told us that the proconsul, after many entreaties, persuaded this man, whose name was Quintus, to forswear and to offer sacrifice, the Church adds: "Wherefore, brethren, we do not commend those who give themselves up [to suffering], seeing the gospel does not teach so to do."[1]

And very different from that of Quintus was the conduct of the apostolic father, Polycarp. When he heard of the ominous voices that had shouted against him, he felt no disposition to leave his flock; but, on the expostulation and entreaty of his friends, he was induced to depart to a country-house not far from the city, where day and night he was instant in prayer for the churches throughout the world, and for all men. In this retreat he had a vision three days before he was taken. The pillow under his head seemed to him to be on fire. From that flame he augured no earthly glory. His interpretation was "I must be burnt alive." He departed to another dwelling, but the pursuers were quickly on the scent. His hiding-place was discovered through the treachery of a servant, one of his own household, whom the *Martyrion*, with pardonable indignation, calls a Judas; but there was

[1] [Ch. iv.]

this enormous difference, that Polycarp was not sold, the secret being extorted from the servant by the agonies of torture. With composed spirit the bishop surrendered to those who had come out against him as against a robber; some of whom, while impressed by his venerable appearance, asked why so much effort was needed to capture so old a man. The captive gave orders that a table should be set before the captors, and that as much as they cared for should be given them to eat and drink; only he besought them that he might be allowed to pray for one hour without disturbance. For two full hours he prayed aloud, and so earnestly that some of those who had come to take him were seized with strong compunctions. As soon as he ceased, he was set upon an ass and conducted through the city. Here he was met by the monarch, whose name was Herod, who, with his father Nicetus, was seated in a chariot. They took him up and advised him to offer sacrifice to the Emperor and so save his life. "What harm is there," they asked, "in saying 'Lord Cæsar?'" When he firmly refused, they, abandoning all hope of persuading him, abused him and cast him violently out of the chariot. He was then brought to the amphitheatre, where the people were waiting for him amid great tumult. On his confessing that he was Polycarp, the proconsul urged him to deny Christ, saying, "Have respect to thy old age;" and other similar things (says the *Martyrion*) according to their custom, such as "Swear by the fortune of Cæsar;" "Repent and say 'Away with the Atheists.'" But Polycarp, gazing earnestly on the multitude, and waving his hand toward it, exclaimed, in a very different sense from what the proconsul intended, "Away with the Atheists!" Being still entreated to abjure his faith and to blaspheme Christ, he gave the touching answer, which is always suggested now by the mention of his name: "Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He never did me any injury; how then can I blaspheme my King and my Saviour?" The proconsul still entreating, he answered: "Since thou art vainly urgent that, as thou sayest, I should swear by the fortune of Cæsar, and pretendest not to know who and what I am, hear me declare with boldness, I am a Christian. And if you wish to learn what the doctrines of Christianity are, appoint me a

day and thou shalt hear them." "Persuade the people," was the reply. The language which these words called forth is remarkable, and must be regarded as an application of our Lord's words, "Give not that which is holy to the dogs;" the infuriated mob being in no condition at that moment for hearing any Christian give a reason for the hope that was in him. "To thee," said Polycarp, "I have thought it right to offer an account of my faith, for we are taught to give all due honour to the powers and authorities which are ordained of God. But as for these, I do not deem them worthy of receiving any account from me." "I have wild beasts at hand," said the proconsul; "I will cast you to them if you do not repent." "Call them, then," replied Polycarp, "for we are not accustomed to repent of what is good in order to adopt what is evil." He was then threatened with fire. "Thou threatenest with fire," he said, "which burneth for an hour and after a little is extinguished, but art ignorant of the fire of coming judgment, which is reserved for the ungodly." In all his answers Polycarp maintained the greatest composure, so that the proconsul himself was astonished at the constancy and serenity of the old man. Proclamation having been made thrice by the herald in the midst of the stadium that "Polycarp confesses that he is a Christian," both heathens and Jews cried out in uncontrollable fury: "This is the teacher of Asia, the father of the Christians, and the overthrower of our gods, he who has been teaching many not to sacrifice . . . or to worship the gods." The Asiarch Philip was besought to let loose a lion, but refused, alleging that it was unlawful for him to do so, as the time for the shows of wild beasts was over. Then they were instant with loud voices, demanding that Polycarp should be burnt alive. Immediately wood and fagots were gathered together out of the workshops and baths, the Jews above all being eager and active in procuring what was needful for the pile. When Polycarp had laid aside his garments, and they were about to fasten him with nails to the stake, he said: "Leave me as I am, for He that giveth me strength to endure the fire, will also enable me, without your securing me by nails, to remain without moving in the pile." When he was simply bound to the stake, he prayed, with other petitions, as follows: "Thou hast

counted me worthy of this day and this hour, that I should have a part in the number of martyrs, in the cup of Thy Christ, to the resurrection of eternal life, both of soul and of body, through the incorruption imparted by the Holy Ghost; among whom may I be accepted this day before Thee as an acceptable sacrifice, according as Thou hast revealed beforehand to me and now hast fulfilled." When the fire was kindled, the flame blazed forth in great fury, and it is reported, though this is regarded by most as legendary, that, shaping itself into the form of an arch, like the sail of a ship when filled with the wind, it encompassed, as by a circle, the body of the martyr; and he appeared within as gold glowing in a furnace. Moreover, there was perceived a sweet odour, as if frankincense or some such precious spices had been smoking there. As he was not consumed by the flame, an executioner was commanded to thrust his sword into his body, and the stream of his blood quenched the fire. It is not unlikely that some eye-witnesses of the martyrdom spoke of the flame as an arched gateway to the realms of glory, and that they spoke of his death as being accepted through the one Mediator, and so itself also an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour. Such natural and appropriate images might, as has happened in other cases, be embodied in the narrative as matters of fact by an author or an interpolator of literal understanding.

What follows in this ancient document is noteworthy as showing that, while the disposition to honour martyrs was at that time exceedingly strong, it was never imagined that, when they had won their crown in heaven, they became entitled to receive Divine honours from the remnant of God's heritage on earth. The Christians, as is not surprising, were extremely desirous of obtaining Polycarp's body, but they petitioned for it in vain, the Jews representing to the authorities that this might occasion a new superstition — that the followers of Christ, forsaking Him who was crucified, might make this martyr the object of their devotion. "Fools," it is said in this letter of the Church of Smyrna, "not to know that it is impossible for us to forsake Him who suffered for the salvation of such as shall be saved throughout the whole world, and worship any other. For Him, as being the Son of God,

we adore, but the martyrs, as disciples and followers of the Lord, we worthily love on account of their extraordinary affection towards their King and Master; of whom may we also be made companions and fellow-disciples." On the other hand, though we may not have the right to censure, we already see the natural regard for the relics of a great saint manifest itself in a way that has no parallel in the New Testament, and which, in the light of subsequent history, we cannot but perceive to be perilous. The body having been burned, according to Roman usage, the Christians obtained possession of the bones. "We took them up," say they, "as more precious than the most exquisite jewels, and deposited them in a fitting place, whither being gathered together, as opportunity is allowed us, with joy and rejoicing, the Lord shall grant us to celebrate the anniversary (*natalitia*) of his martyrdom, both in memory of those who have already finished their course, and for the exercising and preparation of those yet to walk in their steps."

The sentence immediately preceding the salutation with which the epistle of the Church of Smyrna ends is characteristic of a simple, devoted people, and, in the circumstances, has a certain pathos. The blessed Polycarp "was taken by Herod, Philip the Trallian being high priest, Statius Quadratus being proconsul, and Jesus Christ being King for ever, to whom be glory, honour, majesty, and an everlasting throne, from generation to generation. Amen." The betrayal, apprehension, and holy spirit of the martyr, the vehement shouts of the infuriated multitude, and the conduct of the rulers, who knew no lord higher than Cæsar, and favoured the people, offer a parallel to the narrative of the Passion such as is hardly to be found elsewhere on the page of history. Nowhere are there so many points of resemblance, although, as the *Martyrion* itself teaches us, the sufferings of Christ were different in their nature and their virtue from those of His followers.

The apostolic father, of whose martyrdom so detailed an account has reached us, is the author of an Epistle to the Philippians, written, according to some, soon after the death of Ignatius, but more probably towards the close of his own life. He had been requested by that Church to send them

the letters of the Bishop of Antioch, and he sent his own epistle along with such of these as he possessed. In Polycarp's own production we have more of those exhortations to honour the bishop, that abound in the writings of his friend; but he bids the Philippians flee fleshly lusts, "being subject to the presbyters and deacons, as unto God and Christ"; and these are words that evince a point of view altogether different from that of the Bishop of Antioch. Like Ignatius, however, he warns solemnly against false teachers, especially the Docetæ. "Whosoever," says he, "does not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is Antichrist; and whosoever does not confess the testimony of the Cross is of the devil; and whosoever perverts the oracles of the Lord to his own lusts, and says that there is neither resurrection nor a judgment, he is the first-born of Satan." There are excellent principles and precepts in the letter, but it gives no evidence of intellectual greatness. Often in the Church, however, and especially in a time of searching trial, high eminence and an imperishable name have been won through force of character, moral and spiritual, in men who grasped, but grasped firmly and devotedly, only elementary and vital truths. A man's momentum, even in the world, depends on something besides his intellect; much more should this be the case in the Church. And it has been said of the very age in which Polycarp lived, that it did not need profound thinkers and elegant speakers so much as devout men who were ready to die for their faith. It needed men who loved much. It was not by theories and systems but by convictions and sentiments, and by the doing and the suffering which were born of these convictions and sentiments, that the Kingdom of God was built up and promoted, and achieved the victory over the kingdoms of the world. Yet this was an age in which apologists wrote, and in which apologists were needed. Let us not undervalue their gifts; but let us remember that they would have written in vain had they not been able to appeal to men of heroic and pure life, by whom the Christian profession was adorned; and if the best of those writers added to their faith knowledge above that of their brethren, they would not have turned their knowledge to such account unless they had first added to their faith "virtue"—courage (ἀρετή)—so that they

were willing to suffer, as well as to write, for the defence and confirmation of the Gospel.

I have spoken of Polycarp as a victim of the persecutions which broke out under Marcus Aurelius. About seven or eight years, or probably fewer, before he suffered death, we find him at Rome; and, as he was then at a very advanced age, we may be assured that he would not have undertaken such a journey without weighty reasons.

Among other subjects of conversation and discussion that came up between him and the Bishop of Rome, Anicetus, was the question of the observance of Easter. The controversy involved a difference not only as to the time, but as to the mode of observance. The Asiatic practice was to keep the feast on the fourteenth day of the month Nisan, whichever day of the week that might be; and with them, accordingly, the day for the annual commemoration of the resurrection fell on the sixteenth of Nisan, whether it was the first day of the week or not. The rest of the Church set aside the Jewish mode of reckoning, and held that the annual commemoration of the resurrection should be on the same day as the weekly.

"When the blessed Polycarp was at Rome," says Eusebius (*Eccl. Hist.* v. 24), "in the time of Anicetus, they had also some little difference of opinion with regard to other points, they immediately came to a peaceable understanding respecting this one, for they had no love for mutual disputes. For neither could Anicetus persuade Polycarp not to observe (μὴ τηρεῖν, *i.e.* the fourteenth Nisan), inasmuch as he had always observed it with John, the disciple of the Lord, and the other apostles with whom he had associated; nor could Polycarp persuade Anicetus to observe (in the eastern way), for he said that he ought to follow the custom of the presbyters before him."

It is well worthy of being noted that this difference, which was afterwards the occasion of great bitterness and of separation in the Church, did not prevent these two men from sealing their holy union in Christ by the common observance of the Supper, and that the *episcopus loci*, not yet, certainly, *urbis et orbis*, preferred in honour his brother from Smyrna by leaving it to him to administer the sacred ordinance.

There is at this time lively sympathy and, where possible, intercourse between churches widely separated in place, but the intercourse is free and spontaneous. Here, for the first time, we have two bishops, representing the east and the west, meeting to discuss conflicting views and customs, *de rebus non necessariis*; and, though each adhered to his opinion, the bond of charity was not broken: the end was simply this, that they agreed to differ.

And we may notice this point: that, if Polycarp does not recognise Anicetus as a superior authority in the Church, neither, on the other hand, is Anicetus convinced by the appeal to the example of the Apostle John. And he was right in not accepting this as of itself a convincing argument. Why, we find Paul himself observing Jewish feasts on the appointed days, but who would dream of imputing to him the opinion that those feasts were of universal obligation? The Bishop of Rome at this time must have felt what the early ecclesiastical historian, Socrates, expressed: "The Saviour and His apostles have enjoined us by no law to keep this feast. They had no thought of appointing festival days, but of promoting a life of blessedness and piety."

A few years (177 A.D.) after the martyrdom of Polycarp, a persecution still more terrible than that which had befallen the Christians of Smyrna broke out in the west, and particularly in Lyons and Vienne. But first let us notice an occurrence which fell between the two dates, and which, according to some ancient accounts, made an impression upon the mind of the Emperor extremely favourable to the Church.

In the year 174 A.D. Marcus Aurelius made an expedition against the Marcomani and the Sarmatian and other tribes, who had showed themselves hostile to the Emperor. In Pannonia (Hungary) he was allured by the foe into an arid region, where, under a burning sun, a considerable part of his army was destroyed by thirst, while, at the same time, it was expected every moment that an attack would be made by the barbarians. Defeat was imminent, and life itself was almost despaired of, when the twelfth legion, which consisted chiefly of Christians, fell upon their knees and prayed. Thereupon a thunderstorm burst forth, spreading consternation and disorder among the enemy, while the copious rain supplied the

thirsty army of the Emperor with the refreshment for which they had ardently longed.

This event was regarded by the Christians as a miracle wrought in answer to their prayers. It appears, however, that pagan historians attributed the same occurrence, some to the prayers of the Emperor himself, others to the arts of an Egyptian sorcerer named Arnuphis. Monuments and paintings have been found in which Marcus Aurelius is represented as in the act of prayer, while the soldiers intercept the rain with their helmets. Coins, too, were struck, bearing on the one side the image of Jupiter Pluvius hurling his lightning against the barbarians. Some authors, however, affirm that the Emperor immediately afterwards issued an edict forbidding, on pain of death, the further persecution of the Christians, and that he gave to the legion whose prayers had brought deliverance the name of "Legio Fulminatrix" (*Fulminea*, the thundering).[1] As to the latter point, it is certain that this is not the correct derivation, as the twelfth legion had borne this name for a considerable time—as early, indeed, as the reign of Augustus.[2]

As to the edict forbidding persecution, it is now considered certain on all hands that no such prohibition was ever issued by Marcus Aurelius. It is not that the supposition of such an edict falls away with the etymology of *fulminatrix* given by this father, but the events that followed so soon in France furnish proof only too terrible that the Emperor's disposition towards the professors of the new faith remained unchanged. Neander quotes a striking passage from Tertullian, which shows how, with perfect honesty, declarations made by heathens were sometimes interpreted in a Christian sense:—

"Marcus Aurelius, in the German expedition also, obtained, through the prayers offered to God by Christian soldiers, showers of rain during that time of thirst. When has not the land been delivered from drought by our supplications and fasts? In such cases the very heathen gave our God

[1] Apollinaris, a contemporary of Marcus Aurelius, gives this derivation. A writer of the eleventh century records that the Emperor solicited the prayers of the twelfth legion, which consisted wholly of Christians, because he had heard that their entreaties were all-powerful with God.

[2] τὸ δωδέκατον (στρατόπιδον) τὸ κεραυνοβόλον.—*Dio Cassius.*

the glory, for it was the God of gods, who alone is mighty, that they cried to under the name of Jupiter."

An account of the persecution that broke out in Gaul, chiefly in Lyons and Vienne, is found in a contemporaneous document, which purports to have been written by the churches in those parts, and is addressed to the churches in Asia and Phrygia. It is considered by some probable that it was composed by Irenæus, who soon afterwards became Bishop of Lyons, the capital of Southern France. It is preserved by Eusebius (v. 1). The salutation is: *οἱ ἐν Βιέννῃ καὶ Λουγδούνῳ τῆς Γαλλίας παροικοῦντες δοῦλοι Χριστοῦ τοῖς κατὰ τὴν Ἀσίαν καὶ Φρυγίαν τὴν αὐτὴν τῆς ἀπολυτρώσεως ἡμῖν πίστιν καὶ ἐλπίδα ἔχουσιν ἀδελφοῖς, εἰρήνη καὶ χάρις καὶ δόξα ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς καὶ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν.*[1]

Servants of Christ, both male and female, belonging to the two churches, who had already undergone imprisonment in the absence of the governor, were brought to the public place in Lyons, into the presence of the governor of the province, and were there examined by him as to their religion. The governor treated them with such harshness that a young man named Epagathus, who was present at the trial and who, though a Christian, was not yet known as such, begged permission to say a word in defence of his brethren. But, instead of saving the victims, he was immediately added to their number, the judge scornfully calling him the Christians' advocate. His apprehension was followed by that of others who did not shrink from the same open profession of faith; and the rage of the people and of the authorities was inflamed to the utmost through the revolting "confessions" which fear extorted from heathen slaves who had been arrested along with their masters. Without regard to age or sex, the most barbarous tortures were resorted to in order to shake the firmness of the martyrs. A number of Christians denied their faith, but in one case courage soon returned. Biblias who, to save herself, had been false to her religion, when requested

[1] ["The servants of Christ that dwell in Vienne and Lugdunum, to the brethren in Asia and Phrygia who hold the same faith and hope of salvation as we, peace and grace and glory from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord."]

to bear witness against her fellow-Christians, refused to redeem her life by such baseness, recanted her recantation, and submitted to torture and death.

The greater number of the accused remained immovable in spite of the hellish art which, with the hope of seducing them, the heathen employed in order to multiply and intensify their torments. This was certainly the most barbarous persecution that had been known since the Church was founded—executioners, people, and magistrates literally giving day and night to the invention of cruelties new and more refined, and better fitted to wring words of unfaithfulness from the lips of the victims. We read here of a kind of boot in which the feet were pressed till the pain became unspeakable, and of a red-hot iron chair in which the prisoners were compelled to sit, that there might be extorted from them, not only the denial of their faith, but the confession of the unnatural crimes laid to their charge. But men and women, both young and old, withstood those manifold agonies, and all that the force and craft of the adversary could wrest from them was the humble but invincible acknowledgment of their faith. Among the exalted examples of superhuman patience and firmness—among "the strong pillars" that stand forth conspicuously in the frightful picture—was the Bishop of Lyons, Pothinus, who was ninety years of age. Infirm in body but youthful in spirit, he was brought before the tribunal, but the near prospect of martyrdom only diffused an expression of joy over his countenance. A multitude raised a wild cry against him, reviling him as bitterly and furiously as if, it is said, Jesus Christ Himself had stood before them. When asked by the governor who the God of the Christians was, Pothinus answered, in order to prevent the blasphemies which he foresaw would be poured out if he now attempted to teach, that the governor should learn as soon as he was worthy of the knowledge. At this reply, those who stood near dealt this man of fourscore years and ten heavy blows, and those who were more distant threw at him anything that offered itself to their hands. Scarcely breathing, he was cast into prison, where he died in two days.

Another of the "strong pillars" was Sanctus of Vienne, a deacon. Repeatedly tortured that there might be drawn from

him some unfaithful or indecent words, he had but the one answer to every question—"I am a Christian." The cruelties inflicted on him at this time and some days after have no parallel but in the annals of the Inquisition. At last, along with a friend named Maturus, he was brought into the amphitheatre, tortured now in this way and now in that, dragged round and round by the wild beasts, seated on the red-hot chair, and at last despatched. Nothing that he endured had drawn from him anything but his first confession: "I am a Christian."

Similar was the confession of a female servant named Blandina, who made this addition: "And with us there is practised no wickedness." Her tormentors, who relieved one another from morning to evening, wondered how the life could remain in a frail body so racked. After other tortures, she was cast in a net to a wild bull, and then stabbed. She had been brought day after day to the amphitheatre to witness the sufferings of other Christians, that she might be constrained to deny her faith. She "remained alone," says Adolph Monod, "like Christ in the wilderness, tempted of hell, forsaken of earth, but upheld by heaven."

Among the prisoners there were citizens of Rome, whom the governor did not venture to put to death without having first received the Emperor's commands. He wrote to him accordingly, soliciting, at the same time, instructions with regard to the other prisoners. Those prisoners were not only the faithful, but the fallen. For those who had recanted were still treated as criminals on account of the revolting charges brought against them. Pitiable was their condition. Their conscience accused them; their very jailor upbraided them with cowardice. Suppose they were now to affirm that they returned to the faith which they had abjured, who would believe in their sincerity? To their great joy, an opportunity was given them of showing their repentance by its fruits. A rescript came from Marcus Aurelius. It was so far similar to Trajan's that those who abjured were to be released, and those who persisted were to be executed. Those timid disciples, then, who had quailed for a moment, were again brought forward and questioned with a view to their liberation; but most of them now declared that they were Chris-

tians, and they were condemned to death with the rest of their brethren. And here there is something to be noticed in the Lyonese martyrs who had continued faithful—something assuredly not less gracious, and, in the circumstances, probably more rare, than heroic devotion. This was their tenderness towards their weak fellow-prisoners who had denied the Lord. They wept and prayed with them. The men who were living in Christ fell, with a love like that of the father in the parable, upon the neck of those from whom the Spirit had departed for a season, and the lost were found, and the dead were alive again.

These heroic sufferers were gentle because they were humble. Even after agonies and cruel mockings they refused to be called martyrs. The name, they said, belongs to Christ, the faithful and true Witness, and of others, only to those whose testimony has been sealed by their death. "We are but poor humble confessors, and ask our brethren to pray for us, without ceasing, that we may be faithful unto the end." We do not wonder when we are told that these men prayed for their persecutors. The Lyonese martyrs evinced, not the fortitude of the savage, or of the Stoic, or of the fanatic, but the better fortitude of men who do not return scorn for scorn and hate for hate, but love mercy and walk humbly with their God.

Neander, I may remark, draws from the rescript mentioned above a conclusion that is scarcely warrantable. He says that Marcus Aurelius did not, any more than Trajan, believe the calumnies that had been circulated against the Christians. Perhaps the Emperor did not believe them all—not the worst in their worst form—but it is admitted by Neander elsewhere that an imperial edict was issued "inviting men to lodge information against the Christians."

Only one particular remains to be added. The bones of Polycarp had been given up to the Christians of Smyrna, but in Lyons neither entreaties or gold could procure for the Christians anything of the remains of their dead. The heathen, in mockery of the resurrection, by the hope of which the martyrs had been animated, cast their ashes into the Rhone. "It will be seen," said they, "whether their God can help them and raise them again from death."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE APOLOGISTS—JUSTIN MARTYR.

The age of the Antonines, during which the Christians suffered so much, forms an important epoch in the history of Roman learning. Hadrian had founded an Athenæum, a kind of academy, at which prelections were delivered by teachers who were maintained at the expense of the State; and under his successors, not only the capital and other important places in Italy, but towns in Gaul and in Africa, had their public schools, in which, among other things, philosophy was cultivated, which, however, often degenerated into sophistry and love of disputation. Christianity was now emerging from the comparative obscurity in which it had been propagating itself at the beginning of the century, and some among the cultivated who were by no means disposed to embrace it began at least to think it worthy of being combated by other weapons than those of rude violence. On the other hand, Christians, even before any formidable attacks were made upon their religion with intellectual weapons, derived this blessing from persecution, that they set themselves to a vindication both of their character and of their principles. For a time the vindication could not but be mainly of the simple kind that Peter required of the believers when the Church was young: "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil-doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ." This, of course, did not exclude appeal to the facts on which Christianity was based as a historical religion, but the main argument with which enemies, and, as we see they were from the beginning, calumnious enemies, were to be met, was that drawn from the holy living of the disciples. And so the

immediate and most urgent task of the apologists was to establish the claim of the Christian faith to toleration by demonstrating that its principles and practices were not immoral and scandalously wicked; but though the apologist, as his name implies, stood on the defensive, he would not long content himself with proving the Christian's innocence of the crimes laid to his charge, but would gird on aggressive armour and carry war into the enemy's country. He would set himself to prove the truth and the incomparable dignity of Christianity, and the falseness and vileness of other forms of religion.

There were apologists before Justin Martyr. The most noted of these were Quadratus and Aristides, both of Athens, who wrote in the time of Hadrian, but whose writings have not come down to us.[1] In the age of the Antonines, and contemporary with Justin, there are named Melito of Sardis,[2] Miltiades, and Claudius Apollinaris,[3] of whose works only a few fragments are preserved. We possess two *Apologies* by Justin. The first and longer was written in 138 or 139 A.D.; the second, it is generally believed, was written a few years before his death, which took place about 161 A.D.

Justin was born at the end of the first century, or at the beginning of the second, in the Samaritan town Flavia Neapolis, the ancient Sichem, and the Nablus of the present day. His parents were Greeks, and appear to have been among the settlers whom Vespasian, at the end of the Jewish

[1] Quadratus (*Eus.* iv. 3) speaks of those who had been cured or raised from the dead by Christ as living εἰς τοὺς ἡμετέρους χρόνους, carrying back his own recollection to the apostolic age. According to the *Chronicon*, his apology was presented in the tenth year of Hadrian (126 A.D.). He became Bishop of Athens, probably after Publius. Polemic works (*Against all Heresies* and *Against Marcion*) are mentioned by himself, but they have not come down to us. [The *Apology* of Aristides has been discovered in a Syriac translation.]

[2] "Melito's appears to have been written after the death of Lucius Verus (169 A.D.)." The following works are enumerated by Eusebius: 1. Περὶ τοῦ πάσχα δύο; 2. Περὶ πολιτείας (right living) καὶ προφητῶν; 3. Περὶ ἐκκλησίας; 4. Περὶ κυριακῆς; 5. Περὶ φύσεως ἀνθρώπου; 6. Περὶ πλάσεως (creation); 7. Περὶ ὑπακοῆς πίστεως αἰσθητηρίων; . . . 17. Πρὸς Ἀντωνῖνον βιβλίδιον. In one fragment there occurs the expression τὰ τῆς παλαιᾶς διαθήκης βίβλια, and from this Lardner infers the existence of the collection of New Testament books.

[3] Among the works of Claudius Apollinaris, who became Bishop of Hierapolis in 170 A.D., was one addressed to Antonine: Λόγοι ὑπὲρ τῆς πίστεως ἀπολογίας.

War, sent into the desolated town, which then took the name given above. Justin was educated in the Pagan religion, but he was an earnest seeker for truth, and, like Augustine and others afterwards, for the knowledge of Divine things. As Josephus had tried party after party among his countrymen, so Justin, though with a different and a more blessed result, attached himself to one system of philosophy after another in the hope of finding certainty and rest. He first tried a Stoic, but soon left him. The disciple of the Porch, it seems, went so far as to declare that the particular thing the inquirer sought—the knowledge of Divine things—was not a necessary subject of philosophical speculation. The next to whom Justin applied was a Peripatetic, who, it is stated, gave himself credit for no small acumen, and who, as might be expected of one of his school, was not disposed to live in an ideal world. At the end of a few days this philosopher became impatient of the inquirer, whose soul was consumed with the thirst for Divine truth, and he, in his turn, had one question to put: What fee did Justin intend to pay him for his instruction? Such an experience might well damp his ardour, but it only led to an immediate separation from the Peripatetic who had acted so unworthily of a philosopher. He now sought refuge with a Pythagorean of great distinction, who began by questioning him about his knowledge of music, and—what was still more important—his knowledge of mathematics. There was no other study that could be compared with mathematics for its power of withdrawing the soul from the things of sense, and so preparing it for the apprehension of the supermundane and the contemplation of the eternally true and beautiful. Justin was obliged to confess his ignorance of this indispensable preparatory study, and was dismissed with contempt.

But he was convinced that spiritual truth was in some measure attainable by men who were neither musicians nor geometricians. There was another well from which this inhabitant of Sichem might draw; and, though it was of man's digging, he went to it in the hope of obtaining living water, which would quench his thirst for ever. He had heard much of the school of Plato, and it so happened that a thoughtful and illustrious representative of it settled in Justin's "own

town."[1] With him Justin had frequent intercourse, and he made rapid progress from day to day. The study of Plato's philosophy gave wings to his soul. Within a short time he seemed to himself to have become a wise man, and he confesses that, in his folly, he hoped to attain to the beholding of God. But this was at least a preparatory study by which, like some others of note in the history of the Church, he was led of the Father to the Son. He could not but find much that was congenial and, at the same time, helpful in that system of which, let me remind you, it has been said: "It desires what is supremely beautiful without possessing what it pursues."

But Justin, while still a Platonist, withdrew into a solitary place "not far from the sea," that he might devote himself to his philosophical studies. Here he one day encountered an old man of mild and venerable aspect, with whom he entered into a conversation which soon passed from indifferent topics and took a serious tone. Although the old man did not call himself a philosopher, he succeeded in convincing Justin that the soul was not necessarily immortal. If it be admitted that it has not existed from eternity, but has begun to live, then that which has received life may lose it. He told Justin, however, of the prophets who were older than the philosophers, and then of those men who had been the friends of Christ, and who had testified what they had seen and heard, and he ended by exhorting him to pray that the gates of light might be opened to him, for no one could truly understand spiritual things unless he received power from God and His anointed.

The conversation he had with that old man, whom he never met again, was as decisive for his future life as the conversation of Philip was for the Ethiopian eunuch's. Justin's heart turned within him when he now obtained a glimpse of the God whom as yet he knew not. He had, however, previously conceived a favourable opinion of the Christians from the courage with which they confronted death, which appeared to him a convincing proof that the calumnies circulated against them were without foundation. The love of carnal indulgence with which they were charged seemed to him incompatible with the joyful surrender of life. We are

[1] We cannot tell whether this means Sichem or Ephesus.

not, however, to suppose that at what he considered the turning-point of his life—his conversation with that old disciple—Justin broke altogether with his philosophical past. For polytheism, indeed, he could not express his abhorrence too strongly,—it was, in his estimation, as in that of others, devil-worship,—but, so far from speaking with unmitigated reprobation of his earlier philosophical inquiries, and especially of what he had learned in his Platonic period, he held the opinion, to which also some fathers afterwards gave expression, that in the better feelings, productions, and personalities of pagan antiquity there were to be discerned traces of Divine revelation—partial workings of the Logos—which formed, or were calculated to form, a transition to Christianity. Accordingly, after he was brought to the conviction that the new religion was the highest, "the only sure and saving philosophy," as he expressed it, he retained his old philosopher's cloak or "tribon," as it was called, indicating that he had not abandoned his former occupation, but had now elevated it to the right and proper sphere. Like many of the Church fathers he could say φιλόσοφε, χαῖρε. At the same time, by the retention of this mantle, he obtained access to many with whom he would not otherwise have had the opportunity of entering into conversation and discussion. He would not otherwise, for instance, have met with Trypho.

The very aspects of truth and the very arguments that are brought home to a man at a great crisis in his history usually leave an ineffaceable impression. There is good reason for believing that Paul's habits of thought and feeling were very much determined by the first words he heard from heaven when he was on the way to Damascus, in which Christ identifies Himself with believers in their interests and struggles and sufferings. The probable influence of those words might be illustrated from passages that are not difficult of explanation, and also, I think, from one that has given occasion to much controversy: "I fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the Church." The old disciple whom Justin met by the seashore referred him first of all to the writings of the Old Testament, and his profound study of those holy books, to which he constantly refers in his own works, may be traceable, not merely to the

attractive nature of their contents, but to the impulse which he originally received when he became a convert.

Although there is no evidence that he ever held any ecclesiastical office, he became an evangelist, and made it his life work to impart instruction in the truths of Christianity to all who would have it. Labouring indefatigably in different countries of the Empire, he found the greatest and most alluring field of labour in Rome itself, which he visited twice, in which he seems to have remained longest, and in which he founded a sort of mission school, chiefly for the benefit of young Greeks.

Justin is the author of two *Apologies*. The first and greater of the two, to which the date 138 or 139 A.D. is assigned, is addressed to the Emperor Antoninus Pius, and to his adopted son, Marcus Aurelius, and to the Senate, and to the whole Roman people. After making the address he is intrepid enough to give the name and all particulars necessary for the identification of the man who comes forward as the defender of the hated and persecuted sect, which was now even dreaded by many. The rulers, he insists, should act worthily of the surnames which they respectively bore—Pius and Philosophus. They should pronounce judgment, not according to preconceived opinion or with the view of pleasing superstitious men, but after rigid investigation and in accordance with truth. The friends of piety and philosophy should not seek to maintain an old religion merely because it is old. If our forefathers leave us an inheritance of disease or shame, none of us thinks it rational to claim or treasure it. Princes who put prejudice above truth may spoil and slay us, but they are no better than robbers in a desert.

Having vindicated the Christians from the charges of immorality brought against them, which was the first duty of the apologist, and having admitted without hesitation that there were seed-corns of truth in the heathen world, which, however, could be brought to ripeness only by Christianity, Justin proceeds to argue from Old Testament prophecy. He not only contends that in the fulfilment of prophecy the finger of God is distinctly visible, but goes so far as to exclaim, "Who would believe that a crucified man was the only begotten Son of God, and was appointed to judge the human race, if

testimonies concerning Him could not be produced from the times preceding His incarnation?" The proof from prophecy was called distinctively the "proof of the Spirit," and was generally considered by the ancient Church to be peculiarly forcible. The other proof, the moral glory of Christianity, which we should perhaps as readily designate in that way, was by no means thrown into the background by the apologist. That Justin should find predictions in the Sibylline oracles, as well as in the oracles to which the old disciple had referred him, does not diminish the force of the argument from the latter, the antiquity of which is undeniable. The Sibylline oracles, so-called, were, at least partly, of very recent origin when Justin wrote.

But Justin saw more than written prophecies and types. Some one has said that the two instruments that have done most for the human race are the plough and the cross. In Justin's eye the first was the symbol of the second, and everywhere he heard dumb nature's testimony to that in which he gloried—as in the vessel, whether propelled by oars or by swelling sails; in the "human face divine"; and in the human body, especially when a man prays with outstretched arms. The very banners of the camp were but gilded and ornamented crosses with which military devotion unconsciously honoured the Captain of our salvation. Such plays of fancy it may not be desirable to imitate, but this at least must be admitted, that in his case it was fancy quickened by a deep love for the Crucified, whom he bore in his heart, and for whom he died.

As the conduct of the Christians at their assemblies for worship was the subject of the most hideous charges, Justin, in his larger *Apology*, is naturally led into particulars, so that his work, like Pliny's letter, serves more than a temporary purpose, and has more than a temporary interest. Those, he tells us, who become convinced of the truth of the Christian religion, are directed to give themselves to prayer and fasting and to supplicate the forgiveness of the sins that are past. "We," says Justin, "pray and fast with them." Then they are led to a place where there is water, and are baptized into the name of the "Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." He speaks of the necessity of regeneration by baptism, applying to it not only the language of Christ,

recorded in the third chapter of John, but the words of Isaiah: "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes." "By this ordinance we become, from children of necessity and ignorance, children of liberty and knowledge, and obtain forgiveness of the sins that are passed. This ordinance is called illumination, because those who learn from us are spiritually enlightened." Compare with this the language of the Epistle to the Hebrews: "But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions." The term "illumination," however, is applied to baptism not, as some have explained it, because the soul is thereby—by the observance of the outward rite—enlightened in the knowledge of Divine things, but because the knowledge and belief of the truths of salvation are presupposed, and are viewed as an indispensable condition for the reception of the rite. Baptism, accordingly, is presented as the decisive turning-point in a man's life, but all that is uttered by Justin on this subject proceeds from an experience and a way of thinking in which, as yet, outward and inward, objective and subjective, were inseparably blended, and when the necessity for carefully distinguishing them was not yet felt as, in consequence of serious differences of opinion, it afterwards was.

"The convert, who has been cleansed by the baptismal water, is brought into the assembly of the brethren, who devoutly pray for him and for all Christians in all places, that God may give them knowledge and grace to practise what they know in their daily life, that so they may attain to everlasting life. After the prayer is ended, we salute one another with the brotherly kiss. Thereafter bread is brought to the presiding minister, and a cup of wine and water. The minister then offers prayer and thanksgiving, to which the assembled people say, Amen. Upon this those who are called deacons distribute to every one present a portion of the blessed bread and of the wine and water; they carry it also to those who are not present. This ordinance is called the Eucharist, and no one is permitted to partake of it who does not believe that what we teach is true, and who has not previously received the baptism for the forgiveness of his sins and for regeneration."

Then follows a passage which naturally has been seized as a proof that the doctrine of transubstantiation was held by the early Church. "We do not," it runs, "receive these things as common bread and common drink; but, as Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, who became incarnate through the Word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so we are taught that the nourishment blessed by the word of prayer and proceeding from Him, whereby our flesh and blood are nourished in virtue of the change (*κατὰ μεταβολήν*), are flesh and blood of that incarnate Jesus."

The language may be interpreted in three different ways: first, as an explicit statement of the transubstantiation of the elements of bread and wine; secondly, as neither more nor less than a repetition, though by no means an exact one, but rather a paraphrase, of the words of institution, declaring that the bread and wine which had been consecrated by prayer were the body and blood of Christ, but leaving it altogether undetermined in what sense they are to be understood. It must be confessed that this interpretation is very unsatisfactory for more reasons than one, but specially because it entirely leaves out of view the important words *κατὰ μεταβολήν*, which of themselves show that the sentence is more than a mere repetition or amplification of New Testament phraseology. But there is a third explanation possible. *μεταβολή* does mean a change, but what change? When and how does the change take place? Is it the consecrated bread and wine, or is it the devout believer who partakes of the ordinance, that is viewed as of the same body as Christ, of His flesh and of His bones? Accordingly, we have this as a third interpretation: the change is not, in the first instance, into the body of Christ, but into the body of the Christian. The bread and wine, becoming by a natural process our flesh and blood, become, by the same supernatural process as effected the incarnation, His flesh and blood. There is, that is, a process of transformation, so far analogous to the natural, going on, in virtue of which we are made conformable to His likeness, and become in body, as well as soul, the heirs of life and immortality.

The "Eucharist": that is the name we already find in Justin, who lays great stress on the offering of prayer and

thanksgiving by the minister, to which, however, all the people say, Amen. He nowhere indicates even the idea of sacrifice. He does, indeed, speak of the bread and wine of the Supper as a pure offering,[1] but it is the pure offering of which Malachi speaks, and which is to be made in every place in the name of the Lord.

The ordinance of the Lord's Supper was at this time dispensed regularly on the first day of the week, on which day, as we have already learned from the letter of Pliny to Trajan, from Barnabas, and from the letter of Ignatius to the Magnesians, the Christians were accustomed to meet for public worship. This day, called by Barnabas "the eighth day," is designated by Justin "the day of the sun" (*ἡ ἡλίου ἡμέρα*). On this day the Christians from town and country meet, and the "memorabilia of the apostles and the writings of the prophets are read." The memorabilia of the apostles (*ἀπομνημονεύματα τῶν ἀποστόλων*), as is generally acknowledged, were our canonical gospels, and this is the first distinct testimony to the regular reading in the churches of the New Testament Scriptures along with those of the Old. After the reading of Scripture, the minister addressed the people, exhorting them to follow such precepts and examples as had been brought before them from the Word of God. Those addresses were originally of a simple and somewhat familiar kind; whence it was, in all probability, that they received in ancient times the name "homilies" (*ὁμιλίαι*).[2]

The "homily" having been finished, all rose to pray. Then the Eucharist was observed, as already described; and at the same time contributions were made for orphans, widows, and strangers, and all who were in distress. Soon the word *θυσία* ("offering") came to be applied to this entire portion of the service, including the offering of thanksgiving by alms as well as that made by prayer.

Eusebius ascribed an important result to this *Apology*—the rescript, namely, of Antoninus Pius, which, as we have already seen, is almost universally considered to be spurious. Not to

[1] *Dial. cum Tryphone.*

[2] The verb (*ὁμιλεῖν*) is used in Acts xx. 11: "When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and *talked* a long while, even till break of day, so he departed."

mention other reasons for adopting this view, we may recall that the Emperor therein not only speaks favourably of the Christians, but ridicules the gods—a thing that no Emperor of the period, whatever might be his private opinions, would have ventured to do in a public document.

An occurrence in Rome itself soon showed that the Christians were still at the mercy of any who chose to inform against them, whether from a personal grudge or from any other motive. A female convert, who had made vain efforts to gain a profligate husband for the new religion, and had seen him sink deeper and deeper in wickedness, succeeded in obtaining a divorce. The husband took his revenge by denouncing her; but, feeling disappointed and impatient because she was not immediately condemned, he denounced also her teacher, Ptolemæus, who was brought before Urbicus, prefect of the city, and, on confessing that he was a Christian, was sentenced to death. Another Christian, named Lucius, who was present at the proceedings, protested against the injustice of condemning a man who was guilty of no immorality, far less of a crime against the State. He was simply asked the question whether he too was a Christian, and, as such, he suffered and was not ashamed. As Tertullian afterwards expressed it, the "confession of the name" (*confessio nominis*), was sufficient; there was no "examination of the charge" (*examinatio criminis*). A third person, who is not named, was similarly treated.

This tragic occurrence gave occasion to the second or lesser *Apology*, which has been called by some simply a postscript, and by others, a preface, to the greater. In the second, Justin notices the questions which we learn from other sources were often put: "Why do not the Christians destroy themselves to come to their God?" and, on the other hand, "Why does not the God of the Christians interpose to save His worshippers?"

Justin defended Christianity, not only against the heathen, but against the Jews. His dialogue with the Jew Trypho is a companion piece to his former conversation with the aged Christian whom he encountered by the seashore. There was this difference, of course, that the part of the opponents of Christianity belongs now, not to Justin, but to his interlo-

cutors. What passed between him and this Jew, who had fled from Palestine at the time of the war raised by Barcochba, which ended in 135 A.D., and had come to Ephesus, need not be restricted to a single disputation, held on a single day; nor are we to suppose that the words are reported in the writing as they were actually spoken in the discussion. We have the substance of it put into this form. There is much that is good in the Dialogue, as, for instance, on the impossibility of obtaining justification by the law, and even Justin's explanation of certain prophecies and types. But on the latter branch of his subject there is much, as in the greater Apology, that is extremely fanciful. Thus the twelve bells on the garment of the high priest are regarded as symbolical of the twelve apostles, whose sound goes into all the earth, and their words unto the end of the world; and the two goats, of which the one is sacrificed, and the other bears the sins of the people into the wilderness, represent the first and second Advents. Moreover, Justin was as entirely ignorant of Hebrew as he confessed to the Pythagorean he was of mathematics. Nor was he strong in history. Speaking of the Septuagint, he relates that Ptolemy, king of Egypt, sent to Herod, King of the Jews, for the writings of the prophets, which he obtained; but, as they were in Hebrew, he afterwards sent to the same Herod for men who understood them and could translate them into Greek. Justin sets forth, however, the fundamental truths of the Christian faith, and expresses his joyful confidence that the persecuted Church would grow as the vine when it is pruned. The time came that the apologist and philosopher should himself suffer, and win the title with which the Church delights to honour him.[1]

It is sometimes stated that Justin sent his *Apology* to the Emperor, and that the Emperor replied by taking his life. There is no evidence that the sovereign ever read the document that was addressed to him in the first instance, or that he was even cognisant of the trial and execution of the writer. But if Justin did not sign his own death warrant by his written defence of the Christians, there is satisfactory evidence that the immediate cause of his martyrdom was his having

[1] The *Epistle to Diognetus* has been ascribed to Justin. For extract, see Schaff, vol. i. p. 146.

come forward, like Epagathus at Lyons, and Lucius at Rome, to plead their cause orally as their παράκλητος ("advocate"), though not before a court, yet before the people. Among the most bitter foes of the Christians were the Cynic philosophers, men who affected elevation above all earthly wants, but who, as Tatian expresses it, took pay from the Emperor for letting their beards grow. In this age they formed the basest of all schools. They were a caricature—though that may seem hardly possible—of what the Cynics had been in earlier days. These men, who everywhere and at all times made it their business to draw down what is high and holy to the dust, could not but detest the new sect, whose superiority to the world was not artificial and hypocritical, but, as was proved so often, a glorious reality. One of these philosophers, named Crescens, attacked the Christians with venom, and held them up to the multitude as despicable atheists. Justin was present, and not only did he refute the calumnies, but, as he appears to have done on other occasions, he tore the mask off the calumniators, exposing the Cynic's cupidity and idolatry of the great, as well as his foul sensuality. It was this man who answered Justin in the way in which the Emperor is said to have sometimes answered others. He resolved to bring him "definitively," as I have seen it expressed, to silence. At the Cynic's instigation Justin was tried along with six others, some of whom, the *Martyrologium* tells us, had been Christians before Justin, and were the sons of Christians. He was tried as a despiser of the gods of Rome. Into the particulars I do not go. Justin was asked by Rusticus, the Prefect, "After you have been scourged and beheaded, do you suppose that you will go to heaven?" "I not only suppose it; I know it," was the reply. He was sentenced to be scourged and beheaded, according to the laws—those laws which he had boldly assailed as irrational, unrighteous, and inhuman. To them he himself falls a victim; but the blows he has dealt will be followed by others all the stronger because he has struck first. "They may kill us," he had once written, "but they cannot harm us; when we suffer, we rejoice."

Justin stands at the head of a long illustrious line. He was the first to take a firm hold of the great thought that Christianity was a religion neither absolutely new nor yet

only differing in mere accidents from the old. An evangelist in philosopher's robe, who felt he had never known wisdom till he came to Christ, he gave his heart and his work and his pen, and, at last, his life, to the defence and confirmation of the gospel. He stands forth in history as Justin Martyr. If we think in this case of the blood as the seed, we cannot but recall the words spoken near Justin's native town: "He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE OBSERVANCE OF EASTER CONTROVERSY.

How and when the observance of Easter arose in the Church; whether it ever was, and, if it was, how long it continued to be, observed in the same manner and on the same day throughout the Church; whether the West or the East departed from the original custom — these are questions to which it is impossible to give an answer except from conjecture.

Of the first discussion we read of, which took place about the year 158 A.D., when Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, was on his visit to Anicetus, Bishop of Rome, we learn nothing from any contemporaneous source, and the earliest information we possess (Irenæus) leaves us uncertain as to the precise points that were under consideration But we are told how the conversation—it can hardly be called a controversy—terminated. The difference remained as it was; but, far from leading to a disruption, it does not appear to have led even to any polemical writing. The two bishops sealed their mutual toleration by the common observance of the Eucharist, which Polycarp dispensed.

It seems, however, that soon after this a difference arose among the Orientals themselves. Both parties observed the 14th of Nisan, but the one celebrated on that day the remembrance of the Lord's paschal meal and the Eucharist connected with it, while the other celebrated the remembrance of the Lord's death as having occurred on that day. The one party held that the 14th Nisan fell on the Thursday, the other that it fell on the Friday of the Passion week. Some fragments on this question have been preserved, but they are obscure.

About the year 190 A.D., in the reign of Commodus (188–192), when Victor was Bishop of Rome (190–200), the discussion broke out anew, and caused an agitation which, for vehemence and extent, had no parallel in the previous

history of the Church. The chief point in dispute at this time was the mode of observance. This appears from the statement of Eusebius, which is based on the discussions of a number of synods that had been convoked for the consideration of the question: "The churches of Asia" (with the exception of Pontus) "believed that, in accordance with ancient tradition, they ought to keep the 14th of the month as the passover of salvation (*πάσχα σωτήριον—σταυρώσιμον*), on which it was commanded the Jews to sacrifice the lamb; so that on this day, whatever day of the week it may happen to be, the time of fasting is to terminate; while the churches of all the rest of the world adhered to the custom which now prevails in accordance with apostolic tradition, and hold that the time of fasting should not terminate till the day of our Lord's resurrection." Accordingly the synods enumerated by Eusebius decided that on no other day than Easter Sunday should the mystery (*mysterium, sacramentum*) of the Lord's resurrection from the dead—that is, the Easter Communion—be observed, and that up to this celebration the fasting should continue. This was in opposition to the Asiatics, with whom the fast ceased at three o'clock on the 14th Nisan, and was succeeded by the Lord's Supper and an "Agape." Baur who, like many other writers, holds that there is no ground for speaking of the Asiatics as a Judaising party merely because they adhered to the 14th,[1] notices what may be conceived as the deepest ground of the diversity which caused so much controversy and excitement. "To the Christians of the west," he says, "the resurrection day was the ever-memorable, infinitely important day on which the little flock of believers were delivered from all their fears, and the reality of redemption after their oppressive doubts and darkness was set in the clearest and most joyful light; it was the day on which the heavy stone was taken from their hearts, and on which, therefore, they could no longer fast and mourn. With the Asiatics, on the other hand, the day on which the decease was accomplished had the prerogative, for at the ninth hour of that day the sufferings of the Saviour ended, the work of redemption was finished, and the glorification had begun, although in the Passion week that might be unknown

[1] Hence called "Quartodecimans."

to the surviving disciples. Accordingly, the object of the Asiatics was to express by their mode of celebration, not a historical form of consciousness, but the true nature and significance of the atoning work which had been completed."[1]

That a controversy which concerned a festival of merely human institution, and in which, if we suppose, as we are entitled to do, that both parties observed it as a Christian festival, no doctrine was involved—that a controversy of this kind should have divided the Church into two hostile camps, and should have been conducted with great violence, is a thing scarcely intelligible unless we take into account the change that had taken place in times and in leading personages since the days when Anicetus and Polycarp conferred so amicably.

If Peter's residence at Rome was not itself a myth, mythical additions had at all events been rapidly gathering around it during the course of this century; and at the time when Victor, who appears so prominently in the Easter Controversy, was bishop, it was generally received that the two great apostles, having met at Corinth, and having travelled from that city to the capital, laboured there together, and at last suffered the martyr's death at the same time, the one having been beheaded and the other crucified. An ecclesiastical writer at the beginning of the following century (the third) boasts that he is able to point out the graves of the two martyrs, the one on the Vatican Hill and the other on the way to Ostia. Here, then, was peculiar lustre shed on a church already conspicuous from its position, as well as from its sufferings in the times of persecution. The other apostles had all laboured and died in the east. The only two who had come to the west at all had come to Rome, and had laid down their life there. Of these two glorious martyrs, the one was that apostle to whom Christ said, "Upon this rock will I build my Church," and he had been the Bishop of Rome.

Moreover, the great concourse of Christians from different parts of the world which was continually found in the capital, not only, from the nature of the thing, increased the importance of the Church there, but was made the basis of an argument to show that the Catholic faith was best understood there and was there preserved in pre-eminent purity. Accord-

[1] [*Kirchengesch.* 1ter Band, s. 159.]

ingly, as we have seen the idea of the Episcopacy develop itself at the beginning and in the middle, we see now the idea of the primacy develop itself toward the end, of the century. A power is growing up which, according to the character of the persons representing and exercising it, and according to relations and circumstances, will put forth claims more or less exalted, and assert itself in language more or less imperious. The Bishop of Rome has influence and means of communication that no other bishop enjoys. If he has an opportunity of casting a hierarchical net over the whole world and enclosing men of every sort, the opportunity is too likely to prove a temptation. Such an opportunity, and such a temptation, the Easter Controversy apparently was to Victor. He demanded of the Asiatics that they should conform to the western custom, and he threatened excommunication in case of refusal. Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, replied, and replied in terms from which some most probable conclusions may be drawn as to the arguments used in the communication addressed to him, which unfortunately has not been preserved. "With us also," he says, "there lie buried men who were great constellations in the Church, and who will rise at the day of the Lord's appearing, when He comes in glory from heaven and raises all the saints. There is Philip, the apostle, who rests in Hierapolis, with two daughters who grew grey as virgins; and a third daughter of his, who walked in the Holy Spirit, rests in Ephesus. There is also John, who lay on the breast of the Lord, who was a priest and wore the diadem of a high priest (*τὸ πέταλον πεφορεκώς*), and whose sepulchre is at Ephesus, where he witnessed and taught. There is also Polycarp, Bishop and martyr of Smyrna, where his bones are laid."[1] After mentioning others, Polycrates proceeds thus: "These all have kept the 14th Nisan, in nothing departing from the gospel, but regulating themselves thereby; and so then I also, Polycrates, who am least of all, observe it according to the tradition of my kindred, of whom some have been my predecessors; for seven of my kindred were bishops, and I am the eighth. They all observed the 14th. I now, my brethren,[2] who am sixty-five years old in the Lord, and

[1] [Eus. *Ecc. Hist.* v. 24.]

[2] The letter was encyclical.

have had intercourse with brethren from the whole world, and have gone through all holy Scripture, am not frightened (*οὐ πτύρομαι*), by his threats. For greater men than I have said, we must obey God rather than men. (*οἱ γὰρ ἐμοῦ μείζονες εἰρήκασι, πειθαρχεῖν δεῖ θεῷ μᾶλλον ἢ ἀνθρώποις.*) I might mention the names of the bishops whom I called together at your desire—great multitudes. When they saw me, little man, they concurred with the letter, knowing that I had not worn my grey hair in vain, but had always walked in the Lord Jesus."

It is remarkable that in this document it is not John, but Philip, that is first mentioned as an authority; and this Philip, though called an apostle, seems to have been not one of the Twelve at all, but one of the seven—the evangelist, whose daughters are spoken of in Acts xxi. If Polycrates did not confound the two Philips, he may have used the word "apostle," not in its strictest sense, but in the wider and more indefinite, in which, for example, it is applied to Barnabas. But whoever this Philip was, and whatever may be the meaning of the name "apostle" as applied to him, it does not appear quite safe to argue from the position here taken with regard to him that Polycrates took a different view of his authorities from Polycarp, who, in the account handed down to us, is represented as making special mention of John. The Bishop of Ephesus, it is not improbable, followed the order of time—the time of burial if not of birth—as he would naturally be led to do by the argument from the authority of the two great apostles, which, we may be satisfied, was employed by Victor.

Polycrates magnifies his apostolic authorities. When Philip is introduced, it is along with his daughters, who were exceedingly famous in antiquity. When John is introduced, it is not only as a teacher, a witness, and an apostle, but as a priest wearing a priestly diadem. There was a tradition[1] that James, the Lord's brother, had worn the diadem (*aurea lamina*). Possibly Victor had appealed to the authority of James, and the Bishop of Ephesus would not be behind, but referred to John as wearing the same high distinction. Some believe that Polycrates speaks tropically,

[1] Epiphanius.

describing the apostle as God's consecrated priest, to whom, as the seer of the Apocalypse, access into the holiest of all was in a special sense opened.

1. It appears that the disputants on both sides appealed with equal confidence and emphasis to apostolic authority. There is no reason to doubt that both parties were equally convinced of their right to employ this argument. On the other hand, it is evident that declarations and appeals of this kind which come up in the second half of the second century no longer possess historic weight. There was, indeed, scarcely any form of heresy that did not claim apostolic authority and appeal to tradition for such ideas as were of the most subjective kind and of the most recent origin; and now in the Catholic Church the authority of tradition and its direct transmission through the Episcopal succession were elevated into a theory (Irenæus), and were made the basis of historical conclusions which the entire Church was expected to receive as infallibly certain. With great keenness, accordingly, did Polycrates on the side of the Quartodecimans, and Victor on the side of the Antiquartodecimans, contend that the custom which prevailed in their respective districts could be traced back to the beginning of the gospel. A custom had grown up, men knew not how, but they could not better vindicate their good right to maintain it than by tracing it to the most sacred names. In this instance there is not the slightest evidence that any of the apostles ever observed the Pascha as a Christian feast, far less that there was a difference among them either as to the time or as to the mode of the observance.

2. We have here the first clear instance of an arrogant assertion of sovereign authority on the part of Rome—the first clear proof, say Roman Catholic writers, that such authority belonged to the bishop, and was generally recognised as belonging to him. Though there may be much that we cannot admire in the document produced by the Bishop of Ephesus—though we may see official pride, and pride of family too, piercing through his phrases of personal self-abasement—yet, apart from the supposition, which is most probably correct, that he was provoked by the arrogant tone of the letter to which his was a reply, we should be doing him injustice if we did not remember that he was standing purely

on the defensive. He was determined to maintain the ancient custom of his own territory, but not disposed to interfere with churches in which a different custom obtained. Victor, on the other side, initiated that policy, afterwards so successful, which not only claims for the Church of Rome a conspicuous and influential position, to which even Polycrates would not deny it was entitled (ἠξιώσατε), but aims at despotic power, demanding, on pain of exclusion from the Catholic Church, conformity to the view which it recognises as alone just. With Victor the main question was not fasting up to three o'clock on the 14th, or fasting up to Easter Sunday, but Rome or Ephesus. In this view, however insignificant the original question might be in itself, the controversy became one of the highest importance, and we cannot wonder that Polycrates should magnify his own see in defending it against the violent encroachments and exactions of Rome.

3. Though the Church of Rome was universally honoured on the grounds already stated, and though its bishop represented the view of the great majority on the observance of the Pascha, Victor's conduct was not universally approved of. The time was not yet come for taking such a giant step forward towards the empire *urbis et orbis*. Having been unable to impose the Roman custom on the Bishop of Ephesus and the other Asiatics who shared his view, Victor attempted, says Eusebius (v. 24), all at once to cut them off from the Catholic communion as heterodox, and wrote letters in which they were branded with this epithet. In all probability, he reckoned confidently on the concurrence of the bishops and synods that had pronounced against the Asiatic usage, but they generally discovered his autocratic procedure, and gave evidence that the Church at this period was not so corrupt and servile as to shut their eyes to the distinction between the unity of the faith and the uniformity of observance. Here was a chronological controversy, a ritual controversy, or, at the very utmost, an exegetical controversy; but the bishops of those days had the justice and courage to ask why men who had not departed from any fundamental doctrine of the Christian religion should be branded as heterodox. Accordingly, in reply to the letters in which the Asiatics were thus branded, they exhorted Victor, and some of them

exhorted him sharply, to cultivate the peaceable sentiments that the spirit of union and brotherly love demanded.

Among those who remonstrated was Irenæus, and the letter written by this "son of peace" (*υἱὸς εἰρήνης*) showed Victor that, whatever traditions he had received from his predecessors, he had not inherited from them their spirit of charity and mutual forbearance. The difference as to the fasting had long existed, but it had only the more set the unity of the faith in light, as appeared in other instances, but particularly at the meeting of Polycarp and Anicetus. It is honourable to Irenæus that, though in the interest, as he imagined, of the faith, he did more than any man of his time to elevate the authority of Rome, he in this instance struck back the hand that was stretched forth so tyrannically from the capital. It is all the more honourable to him because, while he had naturally deep sympathies with the Asiatics, he decidedly differed from them on the particular question of the Pascha. Though he might think himself on the right side, he would not have a question disposed of in an unchristian spirit and way, or made subservient to the ends of hierarchical ambition.

Meanwhile, Victor's projects were wrecked. The adherents of the oriental custom were not yet pronounced heretics. But the occidental usage gained ever more the ascendency, and the final result could not be doubtful. The hand that had been "repelled" would yet grow heavier. Practical energy, for which the Asiatics had never been distinguished, but for which the Church, as well as the State, was pre-eminent in Rome, would ultimately succeed in subduing and silencing opposition. Moreover, the western observance had the enormous advantage that it was free from even the remotest appearance of Judaism, which had gradually become a more odious and intolerable charge among all who bore the Christian name. At length, at the great Council of Nice (325 A.D.), the controversy was decided. All brethren in the east who had previously held the Pascha simultaneously with the Jews, were required to hold it henceforth simultaneously with Rome.[1]

[1] It is to be observed that there was no such controversy as to the observance of the first day of the week.

CHAPTER XIX.

GNOSTICISM—BASILIDES, VALENTINUS, OPHITES, SETHITES, CAINITES, MARCION.

With certain fundamental Gnostic ideas we are already familiar, but it is desirable now to give a brief account of one or two of the most celebrated Gnostic systems which were formed in the course of the second century.

One of the most celebrated Gnostics was Basilides, who taught in Alexandria about 125 A.D., having, according to Epiphanius, come to that city from Smyrna. He professes to accept as the source of his system a secret tradition, which had proceeded from Ham, the son of Noah, and had been preserved by oriental wise men, Barkabas, Barkoph, and Barkor, and, from the time of Christ, by the apostle Matthew and others. The principles were unfolded in twenty-four books (ἐξηγητικά), to which he gave the pretentious name of a "Gospel."

At the head of his system Basilides places a Being incomprehensible, and therefore indistinguishable by name (τὸ ἄῤῥητον), the non-existing God—not existing, that is, in time (ὁ μὴ ὢν θεός). This nameless God has, not through emanation, but through His will—through His word—called the world into existence out of nothing (ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων). But this original creation is not the world in full development, but only in germ (σπέρμα τοῦ κόσμου; also called ἀμορφία τοῦ σωροῦ, which corresponds with the word Chaos).

Out of the nameless God life is developed in the following order:—

νοῦς (called the First-born and the Spirit); the λόγος, the Divine understanding; then φρόνησις (Thinking Power); then, in further emanation, σοφία (Wisdom), δύναμις (Force), δικαιοσύνη (Righteousness), εἰρήνη (Peace).

These seven powers, which are not conceived of as mere

abstractions, but as living personalities, form, with the original Being from whom they are derived, the first heavenly or sacred ὄγδοας ("octave").

Out of this is formed a second and similar heaven, and a third and a fourth, and so on, to the number 365. These 365 heavens, or spirit-realms, where we have a gradation from more to less perfect, are comprehended in the mystic name "Abraxas" (ἀβράξας = 365). By the last emanation the Pleroma (the 365) approached the bounds of Chaos. The chaotic powers stormed against it, and drew to themselves luminous particles. Thereupon the angels of the lowest order, particularly the first of them—ὁ ἄρχων—created the imperfect world of sense and the race of mankind.

The Archon, a limited being, who holds a low place in the Pleroma, is the God of the Jews — the God of the Old Testament. He does not, however, act freely and independently, but serves as a mere instrument of the purpose of the supreme God, which is to bring the process of development to its goal. For the completion of this process there was needed a special revelation, far transcending the wisdom and power of the Archon; nay, it was needful to deliver mankind from the sway of the imperfect being. Accordingly, the highest of the spirits that emanated from God—the νοῦς —united himself with a man, and that man was Jesus, the union taking place at the baptism in the Jordan.[1] Up to the solemn act of consecration at the Jordan, Jesus did not differ from other men; but now the Spirit of God came upon Him, and He was constituted and became the Son of God at the very time the voice was heard from heaven, saying: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The followers of Basilides, therefore, held the baptism to be peculiarly worthy of commemoration; and it is worth noticing that the earliest mention of the festival of Epiphany[2] is an allusion by Clement of Alexandria to the annual celebration of Christ's baptism by the Basilideans.[3] Like Cerinthus, Basilides appears to have held that the νοῦς left Jesus at the time of the

[1] Compare Cerinthus.

[2] In the west it was rather the manifestation to the Magi.

[3] According to Neander, Epiphany was first observed by Judæo-Christians. This is a conjecture.

Passion, and that what Jesus suffered He suffered, not as the Redeemer, but simply as a man and, like other men, not without sin, though in Him sin was reduced to a minimum. The idea of substitutionary suffering does not enter into the system. Every man must personally make expiation, and special blessedness belongs to the martyr who has the opportunity of making atonement by the voluntary surrender of his life.

According to some representations, Basilides taught not only generally that all the passions to which man is subject spring from the matter in which his spirit is immersed, but that the particular objects, animate and inanimate, with which he is surrounded, tend to produce effects corresponding with their own nature. The wolf awakens in him cruelty, and the stone obduracy. Redemption, then, is obtained as we rise above material influences, and live out the ideal and spiritual world which has been revealed to us.

It seems agreed that the moral principles and life of Basilides were pure. "Let us love all, for all is kin to all," he was wont to say; "but let us hate nothing and desire nothing." His followers, however, are accused of abandoning themselves to licentiousness, and of devising endless sophisms as a cloak for the most degrading vices.

Valentinus likewise taught in Egypt. He was probably born there; at all events, he was early brought under the influence of Philo's philosophy. He also studied the Pythagorean and Platonic philosophies, and alleges that he was indebted for instruction to one Theudas, a scholar of Paul's. He came to Rome about 140 A.D., and spread his doctrines there when Hyginus was bishop. Being excommunicated as a heretic, he went to Cyprus, and died there about 160 A.D.

In the æon-world of Valentinus—the world of eternities, the everlasting ideas which underlie this finite world of sense as its presupposition—we have a succession of syzygies, that is, of æon-pairs, which, according to the usual emanation-doctrine, descend to the more imperfect according to the distance from the original Being and ground of all being, which he calls the Bythos (which indicates not only incomprehensibility, but immense fulness of life), and also the

προπάτωρ and προαρχή. Although the Bythos is sometimes represented as sexless, yet there is a syzygy even here, at the very fountain. He is conceived of as one, and yet as two. He has a partner σιγή ("Silence"), who is also called χάρις ("Grace"), and ἔννοια ("Thought"). We are to conceive of him as absolute, as hidden in everlasting silence and secrecy, but at the same time as inherently blessed, if not the fountain of blessedness; and still further, we are to conceive, it may be, of ἔννοια as self-conscious and comprehensible only to his own thought.

But from Bythos and Sige come forth νοῦς (Reason), called also μονογενής (Only-begotten), and with him ἀλήθεια (Truth). Out of this celestial syzygy come the λόγος and the ζωή (the "Word" and the "Life"), and out of this æon-pair comes the ideal man, who is united with the ideal Church. These constituted the first ὄγδοας—the holy Eight. Then we have five æon-pairs from the Logos and the Zoe, and six æon-pairs from the ἄνθρωπος and the ἐκκλησία—a holy δεκάς (Ten), and a holy δωδεκάς (Twelve), which, together with the ὄγδοας, give us the number Thirty, and constituted the fulness of the Divine life (πλήρωμα).

The Æons have now a longing desire to unite themselves with the absolute and invisible, from whom they proceed, and to live in the contemplation of Him (as νοῦς alone of their number could do). In the youngest of the female Æons—σοφία—this desire becomes a passion, and she enters into an alliance with the Supreme; but the offspring—the Earthly Wisdom—is an unripe, pitiful being, who in her turn has a son, the Demiurgus, the creator of a world which, so created, must necessarily be full of imperfection and misery.

To restore the harmony of the universe, disturbed by that unnatural passion and its fruit, we have a new emanation from Nous and Aletheia—Christ, who is united with the Holy Spirit. Of this heavenly marriage Jesus is born. But the Æons had now been united in blessed communion and made like in knowledge, and they are represented as having brought together all that they had of the beautiful and good, the entire pleroma concurring in the last emanation to the glory of the eternal Bythos.

Christ and Jesus, then, appear in this system as two different

beings. The latter appeared on earth, and His work was to redeem men, to bring them back to the realm of light; yet He could not Himself come into immediate union with matter. The Messias, whom the Demiurge had promised to His favourite people, had a heavenly, ethereal body, and the Jesus Soter (σωτήρ, "Redeemer"), united Himself with Him at His baptism. All who become closely connected with Him are elevated into pneumatic natures. These are the true Christians, the true Gnostics, the nobles of the race. Beneath them stand the psychical natures, those who are destitute of the highest consecration of the Spirit, though they occupy a better position than the purely carnal (the "somatic" or "hylic"). Corresponding with this threefold division we have the division of religions: Paganism, Judaism, Christianity —carnal, psychical, pneumatic.

Note.—According to another account of Valentine's system, the Æon Horos prevented Sophia from approaching Bythos, but out of the unsatisfied longing of Sophia itself arose the Achamoth (ἡ κάτω σοφία), thus bringing disorder into the pleroma, till the Father of all directed Horos to cast forth the abortion.

[Hatch points out that, according to Tertullian, Valentinus himself "regarded the Æons as simply modes of God's existence, abiding within His essence."—*Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church*, p. 258.]

The system of the Ophites (Naassenes, "serpent brethren") was likewise of Egyptian origin, and is regarded by many as the most ancient of all. To come at once to what is most characteristic, we have to notice that Jaldabaoth, son of Chaos, into whose genealogy it is unnecessary fully to enter, but who is represented as still partaking of a spark of Divine light, is conceived of as not only a limited but a malicious being, whose great aim is to frustrate the intentions of the good God. According to the account given in Irenæus, he sent forth from the waters a son without a mother, and this son sent forth a third being, and so on till a Hebdomad was completed, corresponding with the seven planets. Jaldabaoth, the chief of the Hebdomad, called upon the six others to form a creature who should be like himself and them. But into this creature (man) the Higher Wisdom breathed a Divine Spirit. Indig-

nant at this, Jaldabaoth, by a fixed dark look into Chaos, the subjacent dregs of matter (Irenæus), begat a son, who is called ὀφιόμορφος, full of malice and wickedness, and therefore sometimes called "the devil." With his help, the enormous Jaldabaoth (who appears also to correspond with the devil) sought to prevent men from attaining the knowledge of the supreme God, and therefore forbade them to eat of the tree of knowledge. But the Heavenly Wisdom took pity on the newly-formed race, and under the form of the serpent, which now appears as her proper symbol and without any bad accessory notion, induced mankind to transgress Jaldabaoth's command. They partook of the forbidden fruit, and their eyes were opened; they became, that is, conscious of their higher Divine nature; they took the great step from merely instinctive to moral existence.[1]

So also the expulsion from paradise was not a righteous punishment inflicted by the Supreme God, but the vindictive act of the enraged Jaldabaoth. But when mankind were driven forth, the Heavenly Wisdom, which had sent the serpent for their deliverance, ceased not to love and care for them. It was she who filled Jesus at His baptism with the Christ Spirit, which, after he had died on the Cross according to the flesh, quickened Him anew, so that He soared up to heaven, and, without Jaldabaoth's perceiving it, seated Himself at his right hand, and gradually supplanted and dethroned him.

"Such," says Irenæus, after describing at considerable length this amazing mythology, by which the history of Redemption is caricatured, "such are the opinions which prevail among these persons, by whom, like the Lernæan hydra, a many-headed beast has been generated from the school of Valentinus."

The idea common to all who bore the name of "Ophites" was the struggle continued through all history between Sophia, whose proper symbol was the serpent, and Jaldabaoth, the

[1] This is a view which some modern writers also have taken of the disobedience —the "supposed" disobedience, as they would say —to the Divine command. According to them, what we call the "Fall" is the awakening to moral consciousness. In this ancient system the same idea is really at bottom, the Heavenly Wisdom effecting deliverance from the service of the envious god, who grudged men their liberty.

son of Chaos, as they called the creator, or fashioner, of the world, who was also the God of the Jews.

Some of the Ophites regarded Seth as the father of the pneumatic race, those who, being akin to Sophia, preserved in purity the Divine spark of light in the midst of the world's disorder. In the fulness of the times, they further held, Seth had reappeared in the person of Christ. Hence arose the name Sethites or Sethians.

On the other hand, the Cainites, who are likewise to be reckoned as a subdivision of the Ophites or Naassenes, held that those whom the Jewish God had hated and persecuted—above all, their patriarch Cain—belonged to the higher, the pneumatic, order. Similarly, they believed Judas alone of the Twelve to have been in possession of the Gnosis. He betrayed the Redeemer merely because, in virtue of the higher knowledge which distinguished him from his brethren, he foresaw that, by the Redeemer's death on the Cross, the kingdom of Jaldabaoth would be overthrown.

The Syrian Gnostics, Bardesanes and Saturninus, have much in common with the Ophites.

Marcion, son of the Bishop of Sinope, in Pontus, who had been excommunicated by his father,—according to Epiphanius, for gross immorality, according to others because he was already a heretic,—came to Rome about the middle of the second century. Soon after he arrived he showed by the question he proposed to the Roman clergy—how they explained the passage, "New wine must be put into new bottles"—that he regarded the Church as still in bondage to Jewish views and the Jewish law. For some time, however, he continued in the best relation with the Roman community, and was honoured at once for his liberality and his asceticism. Becoming acquainted with the Syrian Gnostic Cerdo, who had arrived in Rome shortly before him, he adopted from him the distinction between the highest unknown God and the known, the Demiurge, who had fashioned the world. In this doctrine he found the basis for his assaults against what he considered the Judaising Christianity of the time. In labouring to propagate his peculiar tenets he gained many scholars and adherents, but when we remember how even the mild Polycarp called him the "first-born of Satan," we are prepared to

believe that he encountered the most zealous opposition. He was excommunicated along with his followers, whom he spoke of as the συμμισουμένοι ("fellow-objects of hate"). It is said that toward the end of his life Marcion became penitent, and expressed the desire to be restored to the communion of the Church. A somewhat hard condition, however, was imposed: that he should bring back his adherents to the true faith, which, even if he had not died soon, he might have found it difficult to fulfil. He left a work, now lost, bearing the remarkable title *Antitheses*.

The main antithesis and, if not the deepest, the most prominent in his system, is the antithesis between law and gospel, or, as it may also be put, between the God of the Jews and the good God. Often, however, he is represented as having held three ἀρχαί, or principles, the Hyle being the third; but this being with him entirely passion, it is easy to see how his system should be characterised as dualistic. The Supreme God and the Demiurge are distinguished as the good God and the just God. It is to be borne in mind however that, according to Marcion, the Demiurge, the God of the Jews, is not only just but passionate, limited, imperfect, inconsistent with Himself. He forbids the making of images, and commands the brazen serpent to be set up. He hardens Pharaoh, and punishes him. He commands the children of Israel to steal. In the Law he requires sacrifices, and in the Prophets he forbids them. He promised a Messias, who should deliver and exalt one favoured nation, and crush all other nations with a rod of iron. The fulfilment of this Messianic promise could not be permitted by the good God. He suddenly descended in His highest manifestation—Christ—to the city of Capernaum. Christ came in a seeming body, not to fulfil the promise, but to destroy the kingdom of the Demiurge. He was hated, rejected, and crucified by the Jews at the instigation of their God, who in His rage enveloped the world in darkness and rent the veil of the temple. After his seeming death, Christ descended *ad inferos*, to preach to the souls of the departed, and bring redemption to all who would hear and believe—to sinners of Tyre and Sodom and Egypt.

From this brief account of his system, you may infer the point that chiefly differentiates him from the other Gnostics;

that indeed has led some to doubt whether the name be properly applicable to him. He entirely rejected the allegorical method of interpretation. Another point of difference is that he recognised the high value of faith, of which the Gnostics generally spoke with contempt.

Adherents of Marcion, whose system was widely adopted and took a variety of forms, were still found in the sixth century.

Without examining any other systems known by particular names, let us make some general observations.

1. As to the moral principles of the Gnostics, it is to be observed generally that they are conditioned by their philosophical view of matter as the seat of evil. Accordingly, their ethics—though some would not use that word, since they hold that the fundamental conception of ethics is wanting—take the form of a conflict with matter, which must be subdued if the spirit is to devote itself, as it ought, to Gnosis. We should naturally expect, then, to find that asceticism was universally practised among them, but this was by no means the case. On the contrary, we read as frequently of the most entire disdain of all moral law and the most gross licentiousness among them, as of severe mortification and abstinence. With regard to certain relations, differences in life were the natural result of differences in theory. Thus some, like Basilides, held that marriage was permissible; while others, like Valentinus, held that it was not only permissible, but a duty; while a third class regarded it as sinful, appealing to the example of Christ and (as they understood 1 Cor. vii. 7) the precept of Paul. Some Gnostics, if they have been correctly represented, even set up the principle that lust is to be overcome by its free and full gratification. It is only the little stream that can be polluted; not the great ocean, which receives all. It would appear that many of the followers of Basilides, who had pronounced the martyrs blessed in having the opportunity of atoning for their sins by a voluntary death, derided them, on the contrary, as men who sacrificed themselves for a phantom, and held that it was lawful to withdraw one's self from persecution by participating not only in meats offered to idols but in heathen worship, arguing that, as Christ took a seeming body, so the Christian might assume

any disguise he chose in order to deceive the carnal multitude, and escape their violence and madness.

Irenæus has a passage in which he accounts for the Antinomianism of many Gnostics, but of course the question might be raised whether Antinomianism necessarily flowed from the doctrine of the Gnosis any more than it flows from the doctrine of justification by faith.

"Animal men are instructed in animal things—such men, namely, as are established by their works, and by a mere faith, while they have not perfect knowledge. We of the Church, they say, are these persons. Wherefore, also, they maintain that good works are necessary to us, for that otherwise it is impossible we should be saved. But, as to themselves, they hold that they shall be entirely and undoubtedly saved, not by means of conduct, but because they are spiritual by nature. For just as it is impossible that material substance should partake of salvation (since, indeed, they maintain that it is incapable of receiving it), so again it is impossible that spiritual substance (by which they mean themselves) should ever come under the power of corruption, whatever the sort of actions in which they indulged. For even as gold, when submerged in filth, loses not on that account its beauty, but retains its own native qualities, the filth having no power to injure the gold, so they affirm that they cannot in any measure suffer hurt or lose their spiritual substance, whatever the material actions in which they may be involved."[1]

2. Their method of dealing with the New Testament revelation.

(1) Some of them accepted it as containing Divine revelation, but, of course, as containing their own doctrine.

That their views were scriptural could be evinced, it is scarcely necessary to say, only by adopting that method of interpretation of which we have already heard as a favourite in so many different quarters, heathen and Jewish as well as Christian. If the rules of historico-grammatical interpretation had any value, it was not for them but only for psychical men. How freely they proceeded will appear from one or two examples. That the expression εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν

[1] *Adv. Hær.* i. 6. 2.

αἰώνων should be represented as involving their emanation theories is not surprising, and hardly is it more so that they should find the mystery of their syzygies (where such appear in their systems) in the language which the Apostle uses of marriage towards the end of the fifth chapter of Ephesians. More remarkable is the arbitrary way in which numbers are explained in accordance with their speculations.

Thus the last emanation of twelve Æons in the system of Valentinus is indicated by the circumstance that, when Jesus was found in the temple hearing the doctors and asking them questions, He was twelve years old. The thirty Æons that constituted the Pleroma are, in like manner, indicated by the thirty years that Jesus passed before He entered on His public ministry, and still further, if confirmation be needed, by the parable of the labourers in the vineyard, in which the different hours—3, 6, 9, 11—being reckoned together with the first, yield exactly thirty. "There are great and wonderful and hitherto unspeakable mysteries," says Irenæus, "which it is their special function to develop, and so they proceed when they find anything in the multitude of things contained in the scriptures which they can adopt and accommodate to their baseless speculations."[1] Their method of interpretation, however, must be taken along with their theory of accommodation and tradition; for they held that Christ and the apostles, while speaking to the psychical multitude by images, communicated to a little pneumatic company the higher truths which underlay those figures, and which had been transmitted by secret tradition.

(2) There were many Gnostics who did not profess to accept New Testament Scripture entirely. Many of them rejected large portions of it, and some of them justified themselves by saying that the apostles had frequently misunderstood Christ, and consequently failed to exhibit His doctrine correctly.

3. Their relation to the Church. The Gnostics had no thought of separating themselves from the Church and putting themselves in antagonism to it. Acting themselves on the principle of accommodation, they could speak, when they expressed themselves publicly, in accordance with prevailing ideas, letting

[1] *Adv. Hær.* i. 1. 3.

themselves down to the standpoint of psychical men. What they aimed at was the formation of a theosophical school, as in the old pagan mysteries, which involved no opposition—at least no declared opposition—to the faith of the uninitiated. Their views of worship were very various. Some Gnostics were even dissatisfied with the simplicity of the Catholic services, and are said to have introduced images and incense.[1] The followers of Carpocrates set up images of Greek philosophers as well as of Christ.

[1] Called Marcosians [from Marcus, probably a contemporary of Irenæus, who treats of his heresy].

CHAPTER XX.

IRENÆUS.

The chief defender of the Catholic faith against the Gnostics was Irenæus. Though he was eminent as a mediator and as a controversialist, and though he was the first of the fathers who could be called a theologian, standing in this respect high above Justin Martyr, and, it need not be said, above the apostolic fathers, only a very few particulars have reached us concerning his outer life. But the little we do learn of him places him in a most interesting and attractive light. As is indicated by his name (from εἰρήνη—"peace"), he was of Greek extraction, and, though the precise place of his birth cannot be determined, seems to have been a native of Asia Minor. He was born about the middle of the second century, as may be inferred from a letter which he wrote to a friend named Florinus, and of which a passage has been preserved by Eusebius (*Eccl. Hist.* v. 20). This passage not only enables us to fit approximately the period of his birth, but contains the only notice we possess—and it is an important one—of his early youth. It would seem that Florinus had erred from the faith, having been seduced, as so many were in that age, by Gnostic speculations, and Irenæus sought to recall him to the sounder principles in which he had been taught by awakening the recollection of days long gone which they had spent together in that city to whose church the Saviour had promised a crown of life. "These (Gnostic) doctrines," writes Irenæus to his erring friend, "have not been handed down to us by the presbyters before us who had intercourse with the apostles. For, when I was yet a boy, I saw you in Asia Minor by Polycarp, learning of him, and most solicitous to gain his approbation. Better than the most recent period of my life do I remember that time (for what we learned in youth grows with our soul and becomes one with it), so that

I could describe the place on which the sainted Polycarp sat and spake, his going out and coming in, his manner of life and his bodily appearance, and the discourses which he delivered to the Church; how he told us of the intercourse with John and with others who had seen the Lord; how he recited their words and what he had learned from them of their Master, His miracles and His doctrine—all that he told us being in harmony with the scriptures, for he had received it from eye-witnesses of the living Word. This I listened to, through the grace of God vouchsafed to me, most earnestly, and wrote it not on paper but on my heart; and through the grace of God I continually bring it into fresh remembrance. And I can attest before God that if that blessed and apostolic presbyter had heard anything of the kind, he would have cried out and stopped his ears, and, according to his custom, would have broken out into the words, 'Gracious God, for what times hast thou preserved me, that I should be obliged to endure this'; and he would instantly have left the place where sitting or standing he had heard such discourse."

Elsewhere also—in his great work against the heretics—Irenæus informs us that, in his early youth, he had seen Polycarp at Smyrna. He never forgot his teaching, and his courageous witness-bearing; the martyrdom with which his eighty-six years of true service had ended was engraven on his memory in characters of fire. Now, as we know approximately the date of Polycarp's death, about 166 A.D.,[1] there is the utmost probability in the conclusion, which must be wide at the best, that Irenæus was born about the middle of the century.

Soon we find him on a soil still more enriched with martyrs' blood than the country he left. He appears as a presbyter in the flourishing church of Lyons, which was a centre of Christian knowledge and civilisation for a great part of the West. By that community, and in the terrible time of the persecution under Marcus Aurelius (177 A.D.), he was not only called to the office of presbyter, but intrusted with the delicate mission to Eleutherus, Bishop of Rome, by which, as afterwards, when he wrote to Victor at the time of the

[1] [There are other dates in the MS. Professor Duff evidently did not think 155 the best supported.]

Easter controversy, he did honour to his name. The confessors of Lyons and Vienne sent to Eleutherus a letter in which Irenæus, whom they had chosen to deliver it and to represent them, is recommended as a presbyter of the Church and a man most zealous for the cause of Christ. The letter containing this recommendation referred to the movement of the Cataphrygians or Montanists—the "new prophets" as they were also called—who had found adherents in Rome as well as on their native soil, but were, at the same time, met with the most decided opposition. In the interests of peace and union, which were seriously threatened, the confessors of Lyons, who in the midst of their own unparalleled sufferings had room in their hearts for the concerns of other churches, wrote not only to the Roman bishop Eleutherus, but to their brethren in Asia and Phrygia, believing, we may suppose, that their peculiar trials would give weight to their words of mediation, but feeling deeply, at the same time, that when the danger from without for the cause of Christianity was so great, there was the greater necessity for Christians attaching themselves more closely to one another and maintaining internal peace. Let it be observed that the Montanists were not yet separated from the Catholic Church, and that, therefore, attempts at mediation might still be made with some hope of success. One thing is certain: the confessors of Lyons, though it is not impossible that they may have sympathised with the views of the Montanists on some points, did not share their principles with regard to Church discipline. There was no principle to which the Montanists gave greater prominence than the principle that absolution could not be validly granted, at least in this world, to those who had fallen into mortal sin. The lapsed, in particular, or those who denied the faith, they would exclude from all hope of restoration to the bosom of the Church, leaving them, however, to use the common phrase, to "the uncovenanted mercies of God." But we know how mildly and tenderly, and with what blissful results, the martyrs of Lyons acted towards those who were found weak in a moment of cruel temptation. We cannot indeed leave out of view the natural bond between the south of France and Asia Minor, but we must trace the mediation mainly to an honest and truly Christian love of peace in the

confessors and their representations. It is not often that the martyr's crown is so richly jewelled as was that won at Lugdunum and Vienne.[1]

It seems to have been when the persecution was raging that Irenæus was sent to Rome on his mission of peace. Soon after his return, he was called to fill the place that had been left vacant by the martyrdom of the aged Bishop Pothinus. It needed a strong and steady hand to grasp the shepherd's staff in those perilous days. The Church, though it had not yet distinct and consecrated buildings, was now visible—visible far and wide in the eyes of the nations; and paganism, alarmed by its rapid progress, had summoned up its resources for deadly struggle with the hated innovation. As regards this danger, however, very much depended on a single man, and the fanaticism and cruelty of the Stoic Aurelius might spend itself, or, if it did not, his life might soon end and a change of rule bring rest. But there were grievous wolves of another sort against which the overseer had to guard the flock. There were schismatics and heretics of many a name—some remembered, most forgotten—who, with all the arts of persuasion and seduction, beguiled the heart of the simple and unwary, preying on the vitals of the Church, threatening not only its unity but its existence. Many a one, if asked to succeed Pothinus while Aurelius still reigned and the people still raged, would have used—honestly enough, but from another feeling than humility—the often profaned words, "Nolo episcopari."

But Irenæus was not the man to be terrified by difficulty and peril. He whose bent it was—and in him it was a hallowed bent—to "follow peace with all men," did not dread the battle, and he accounted it no great sacrifice to make for his Master if he should fall in the battle. Ready to follow Pothinus in his martyrdom if he were summoned to do so, he was, on the other hand, thoroughly equipped for the warfare he must wage with the foes who assailed the

[1] Some have inferred from a statement of Tertullian, in which he traces to Praxeas "the opposition of Rome to Montanism, that, upon the representations made by Irenæus, Eleutherus was disposed to cherish thoughts of peace: it was Praxeas who prevented him from recognising the prophets." Tertullian, however, does not name the bishop who was thus influenced.

Church from within. He somewhere declares, glorying in the fact, as he might justly do, that there were many belonging to barbarous tribes and unable to read who, without paper and ink, bore the word of salvation written by the Divine Spirit on their hearts; but he himself was a man of extensive reading, familiar not only with the Scripture arguments but with classical literature. Being, at the same time, a man of keen intellect and having that living experience of the power of Christian truth which inspires invincible confidence, he was able to pursue a false teacher through all the windings of error, carrying everywhere through the dark labyrinth a torch that had been lighted from above, and never losing hold of the thread by which he might not only return himself but drag forth his adversary, and, if one may venture to make such an application of the words, "make a show of him openly." But the truth is that we know nothing of the Gnostics but what we learn from the pages of the fathers, and particularly from those of Irenæus and of Hippolytus. For example, we gather from the former a somewhat full account of the system of Valentinus. I need not again describe this or any other system, but a few general remarks may be made.

1. Irenæus clearly apprehended the great danger with which Christianity was threatened by Gnosticism, and, though it had other defenders, what has been said of him[1] is certainly not applicable in the same degree to any other: "He strangled the gigantic serpent which lurked by the cradle of the infant Church." For Gnostic systems were most dangerous. Though they had neither the vitality that would carry them through centuries nor the force from which great moral and spiritual results could be expected; and though it may be true, as has been said, that no world-moving lever lies in such theosophic and symbolic speculations or fancies, or whatever the mixture may be termed, yet it is undeniable that they have a great destructive power, sapping the foundations of the new religion as a positive objective revelation, which it essentially was, and at the same time leading, at least generally, to the most gross immorality,

[1] By Graul [*Die christliche Kirche an der Schwelle des irenäischen Zeitalters*].

which indeed, as the Gnostics bore the Christian name, partly accounts for the calumnies which were circulated against the Christians universally. It is possible that Irenæus took an exaggerated view of the evil and the peril, but in his eyes Gnosticism was not only impiety and folly, but the natural parent of lust and wickedness.

2. In meeting the danger Irenæus not only attacked Gnosticism but depreciated what he regarded as its source—pagan philosophy. He was alarmed that the Gnostics had borrowed all that their systems contained, partly from the theogonies of the old Greek poets, and partly from the systems of the philosophers, only changing names while adhering substantially to their heathen views. Hence the dilemma of Irenæus: Either the ancient poets and philosophers, with whom the Gnostics agreed so thoroughly, knew the truth, or they did not. In the former case, the coming of the Redeemer into the world was superfluous; in the latter case, the Gnosis was a vain boast, for it was already possessed by those who, on the supposition, knew not God. Whether this dilemma was conclusive or not, it is obvious that the man who could put it would not unnaturally be led to take a very different attitude towards Greek philosophy from that taken by Justin Martyr, and, before him, by Clement of Alexandria, and, after him, by Origen. You will, for example, recall Justin's idea of the σπερματικὸς λόγος, and the fact that he continued to wear his philosopher's cloak after his conversion. Irenæus, on the other hand—and the same holds true of Tertullian—refused to recognise philosophy, even in its best systems, as a stage of human development, fitted to prepare for the reception of the truth, but, on the contrary, regarded it as the mother of heresies. His attitude towards it, then—and we can hardly wonder that it should be so—was one of decided hostility.

3. By far the most important point to be noticed is this: Irenæus, in meeting Gnostic heresies, develops the idea of Catholicity, and, in inseparable connection with it, that of the authority of apostolic tradition.

The name "Catholic Church" occurs for the first time in the letter of Ignatius (or the pseudo-Ignatius) to the Church

of Smyrna. It occurs again in the encyclical letter written by the Church of Smyrna on the occasion of the death of their bishop, Polycarp (166 A.D.). In the former case, the idea of Catholicity is undoubtedly associated with that of a succession of duly appointed teachers who represent the Saviour Himself, and faithfully preserve His pure doctrine.[1] The term does not denote merely universality—that is, among the Christians—in the present, but a universality which embraces the past, and particularly the apostolic past. The two essential "moments" of Catholicity have been found by some in Col. i. 5, 6: "For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before (*προηκούσατε*) in the word of the truth of the gospel; which is come unto you, as it is in all the world (*ἐν παντὶ τῷ κόσμῳ*)."

But let us hear the language of Irenæus himself:[2] "It is not necessary to seek from others the truth which it is easy to obtain from the Church, since the apostles, like a rich man in a bank, lodged in her hands most copiously all things pertaining to the truth. She is the entrance to life; all others are thieves and robbers. On this account we are bound to avoid them, but to make choice of the things pertaining to the Church with the utmost diligence, and to lay hold of the tradition of the truth. For how stands the case? Suppose there arise a dispute relative to some important question among us, should we not have recourse to the most ancient churches with which the apostles held constant intercourse, and learn from them what is certain and clear with regard to the question? For how should it be if the apostles themselves had not left us writings? Would it not be necessary in that case to follow the course of the tradition which they handed down to those to whom they committed the Churches? Those who, in the absence of written documents, have received the faith, are barbarians so far as regards our language, but as regards doctrine, manner, and tenor of life, they are, because of faith, very wise indeed. And, having that ancient tradition of the apostles, they do not suffer their mind to conceive anything of the portentous

[1] *ὅπου ἂν φανῇ ὁ ἐπίσκοπος, ἐκεῖ τὸ πλῆθος ἔστω· ὥσπερ ὅπου ἂν ᾖ Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς, ἐκεῖ ἡ καθολικὴ ἐκκλησία.*

[2] *Adv. Hær.* iii. 4.

language of these teachers among whom neither Church nor doctrine has ever been established."

Irenæus, you perceive, makes here the supposition that the apostles had left nothing in writing. We are not to imagine, however, that he undervalues what they have left. On the contrary, we have already heard him say emphatically that what he learned in his early days from Polycarp was in harmony with the Scriptures, and elsewhere he says: "If you would escape the multiform and mutable opinions of the heretics, you must nourish yourself in the bosom of the Church on the Scriptures of the Lord, which are perfect, as being inspired by the Holy Ghost." Scripture and tradition were two voices from one mouth, and they conveyed the same truth. Against apocryphal, pseudonymous, mutilated, or interpolated books, such as the heretics often appealed to, he set, and argued from, the genuine, uncorrupted writings which were received by the Church. But he knew that there was little use in contending against the Gnostics from Scripture alone. "The question as to the interpretation of Scripture was in those days as serious as the question as to its authority; and it could not but have a powerful effect, especially with those who were not yet tainted with the heresies denounced, to awaken and appeal to the Church's consciousness as to what it actually had heard and received. The heretics often declared themselves to be in possession of a secret tradition; with far greater reason, and with far greater effect, could Irenæus appeal to a tradition that was not secret, not esoteric, but as public as anything that was ever written with ink and given forth to the world. This tradition to which he appeals originated with the apostles themselves, and was preserved by means of the successions of presbyters in the Churches." The criterion of truth, or, as it may be expressed also in accordance with his view, the criterion of the true interpretation of Scripture, lies in apostolic tradition. And though Irenæus may have sometimes spoken unguardedly, as almost every keen controversialist does speak, and though his language has been turned to excellent account by Roman Catholic authors as showing that their system is in accordance with the primitive faith, it ought to be admitted that the argument from tradition was at that period, and in those

circumstances, a fair and valid one; and it is not astonishing that it should be powerfully pressed by a man who had sat at the feet of Polycarp, who, again, had sat at the feet of John. He is not to be condemned for acting in a way different from the reformers of the sixteenth century. His spirit and object were indeed the same as theirs. He sought to exhibit and maintain the true doctrine of the apostles. He was near the fountain, and the stream was still pure: they had to do with a tradition corrupted and defiled in the course of centuries by innumerable additions, and they went back to Scripture, which, though it might still be misinterpreted, was the safest, and which they pronounced to be the only, rule of faith and practice.

4. Irenæus magnifies (this is involved in the idea of Catholicity) the Church, but not in a hierarchical spirit. It is the paradise planted anew in this fallen world, because it possesses the treasures of heavenly knowledge, and the Divine life is nourished within its bosom. According to his own language, which is often quoted, "Where the Church is, there is also the Spirit of God, and where the Spirit of God is, there is also the Church and every gift of grace." Further, while he assigned a certain pre-eminence (*potior principalitas*) to the Church of Rome,[1] he expostulated with Victor, denying both his authority and his justice when that bishop had resolved to excommunicate the Asiatics because they did not observe Easter as it was observed in the west.

[1] "Ad hanc enim ecclesiam, propter potentiorem principalitatem, necesse est omnem convenire ecclesiam, hoc est, eos qui sunt undique fideles, in qua semper ab his, qui sunt undique, conservata est ea, quæ est ab apostolis traditio."—*Adv. Hær.* iii. 3. 2.

CHAPTER XXI.

MONTANISM.

THE word "Montanism" is of considerably later origin than the system which it denotes. It was originally known, apparently till after the time of Eusebius, as *Φρυγῶν αἵρεσις* ("Heresy of the Phrygians"), and those who adopted it were called *οἱ κατὰ Φρυγάς* ("Cataphrygians"). But if the system existed before the man from whom the name by which it is commonly designated is derived, in him, at least, beyond any other, it was embodied. He gave it a mighty impulse, and gained for it many adherents.

About the middle of the second century, or perhaps about 170 A.D., Montanus, who, according to most accounts, had been a priest of Cybele, but had recently become a convert to Christianity, made himself conspicuous among those who, in Phrygia and the neighbourhood, gave themselves out as inspired. They appeared first in Ardaban, a village in Mysia, on the confines of Syria, and latterly, in that country, in Pepuza—hence the name "Pepuzians" as well as Cataphrygians. There is some discrepancy in the statements made by different writers as to the claims which Montanus advanced for himself personally; they are not at one as to whether or not he considered himself the Paraclete. Christ had said to the disciples before His departure that He had many things to say unto them, but they could not bear them then, and had referred them to the Paraclete—by whatever English term that word should be rendered—whom He would send to them from the Father. According to the general belief, this promise was fulfilled by the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, but, according to one account, Montanus imagined and proclaimed that he was personally that promised Paraclete, and, consequently, that there had come with him a new epoch in the history of the Divine

revelations. According to another view, he considered himself, and gave himself out, not as the Paraclete, but as His most powerful organ, favoured with special communications from Him in moments of ecstasy, which he appears to have enjoyed frequently in the midst of the congregation. Whether you accept the first or the second account, the supposition of course is that, having been accustomed to the celebration of the rites of Cybele, in which the excitement of the worshippers frequently rose to frenzy, he sought to produce similar mental and spiritual conditions as a votary of the new religion. That there was a fatal heathen element in Montanism can hardly be denied, and the foul spot is not wiped away when it is alleged that some members of the sect, Tertullian in particular, have been sufficiently earnest in their denunciations of paganism. Such denunciations have also been heard in the Roman Catholic Church after, as well as before, the time when the corrupting influence of heathenism was powerfully felt.

From the description of the raptures to which Montanus was subject, it would appear that, while he was in them, not only calm reflection was impossible, but self-consciousness was suspended. When the Spirit speaks, *necesse est excidat sensu* ("one must lose consciousness"). In enigmatic, mystic expressions, which his contemporaries called *ξενοφωνίαι*, he announced new and terrible persecutions, and exhorted to the stedfast and intrepid confession of the faith. On the other hand, he announced the judgments of God on the persecutors of the Church, and the speedy return of Christ from His throne in heaven, and the realisation of the thousand years' reign, the glory of which he described with the most attractive colours and figures. But, while he presented himself as a moral and religious reformer, by whom the Church should be raised to a higher degree of perfection, and its members to stricter principles and conversation, it is not alleged that he assailed the Catholic doctrine, so far as it was established in his time. The object of the new revelations was rather to perfect Christian life and discipline, and to lead to a better understanding of Holy Scripture.

Two women, Priscilla and Maximilla, who were, like him-

self, enthusiastic and subject to raptures, attached themselves to Montanus. They accompanied him from place to place; and it is stated, even by writers who say that he believed himself to be the Paraclete, that he regarded their utterances as oracles. One utterance from the lips of Maximilla has been preserved by Epiphanius: *μετ' ἐμὲ προφῆτις οὐκέτι ἔσται, ἀλλὰ συντέλεια* ("After me there will not again be a prophetess, but the end will come"). The nearness of the end was ever a prominent topic with the Montanists. It was characteristic of them, as opposed to the Gnostics, though they may be contrasted with the Gnostics in other respects also, that they turned their thoughts habitually to the end of the world and not to its beginning. Possibly, as has often been the case, the Chiliasm had been nourished by persecution; at all events, they believed that the New Jerusalem would soon come down from heaven, and that it would come down at Pepuza. So it had been revealed to Priscilla by the Lord Himself, who appeared to her in the form of a woman with shining raiment.

1. The Montanist principle of revelation took the form of heathenish afflatus. "Behold," was the language of Montanus himself, "the man is a lyre, and the Spirit plays upon him like a plectrum!"[1] Such figures, however, would not of themselves prove much, for they have sometimes been used loosely by others. But they were not used loosely by him. The expression already quoted — *necesse est excidat sensu* — is in harmony with all the accounts of the *ἔκστασις* ("ecstasy") in which the Montanists received their supernatural communications, and they appealed to Scripture to show that the *ἔκστασις* was not a new method of Divine revelation; one of the passages brought forward in support of this view being Gen. ii. 21, where *ἔκστασις* is the Greek translation of the Hebrew for "a deep sleep." Tertullian argued from the circumstance that, at the Transfiguration, Peter, as we learn from Luke, did not know what he said; and so, when he uses that expression, *necesse est excidat*

[1] According to the fathers, it was a mark of the false prophets that they spoke in ecstasy. But among the lies, says Clement, "the false prophets also told some true things." See Blunt [*Dict. of Sects, Heresies, and Schools of Thought*, Art. "Montanism"].

sensu, of the *homo in spiritu Dei constitutus*, he adds, *obumbratus virtute Divina* ("overshadowed by the Divine power"). The Montanists, however, so far contracted the range of this most dangerous principle, which otherwise might have had the most disastrous effect among an excitable people, by teaching, on the one hand, that with regard to some matters—the most important doctrines of the Church—the Paraclete brought nothing new, and by declaring, on the other hand, that, after Montanus and his two fanatic companions, no prophet or prophetess would arise in the world, but the end would come.

2. As to morals and discipline, the Montanists were most rigid. While the Divine law is by its nature eternal, their principle was that, the nearer the end of the world, so much the more should the flesh be mortified. Accordingly, they imposed frequent fastings, these, however, not always representing entire abstinence from food, but being sometimes *ξηροφαγίαι* (meals of bread and dry food). They recommended celibacy, and unconditionally forbade a second marriage.

The same extravagant rigorism showed itself in their prohibiting flight in time of persecution. "Desire not to die"—such are the words ascribed to Montanus—"on your beds, but as martyrs, that you may glorify Him who suffered for you." Here, however, allowance must be made for the reactionary tendency which arose in consequence of the growing laxity of profession; for soon it had become customary for whole communities of believers to redeem themselves from persecution with money, or on terms, expressed or understood, which could not but seem to the more rigid equivalent to a denial of the Master. The purchase of the friendship of the world,—and men of high position and office in the Church were guilty of it, and influenced multitudes by their example,—which it is not easy for any man now to justify, could not but seem detestable to the Montanist, who was so filled with the fundamental thought of his system—the approaching world-catastrophe—that worldly interests appeared in his eyes light and contemptible, and heavenly duties appeared most imperative and pressing. If the Montanist, too, was driven to an extreme which cannot

be defended from either the example or the word of Christ, and which, as we have seen, was avoided and condemned by the Church of Smyrna when their bishop, Polycarp, suffered, we must at least admit that the lukewarmness and looseness that undoubtedly existed among many Christians when the Montanist principles were fully developed[1] called for sharp rebuke, and the inculcation of principles the most stern, self-denying, and uncompromising.

3. The Montanists, like the Gnostics, made an offensive distinction between themselves and the great body of professing Christians, which they expressed by the same terms, though these were not intended to convey precisely the same meaning. Although—and in this respect also they resembled the Gnostics—they had no desire to separate themselves from the Catholic Church (from which, however, they were eventually extruded), they regarded themselves as exclusively presenting the realised idea of a Church within the Catholic whole, as the community of the Spirit, composed of holy, enlightened, and hallowed members. They were the truly spiritual men, the pneumatic, while the others were only psychical, being destitute of the Spirit, and if possessed of a *fides* (faith), being possessed of only a *fides animalis*.

4. As to the relation of the Montanists to the ministry of the Church, they taught, justly enough it may be, that conformity with the most rigid moral principles and requirements was incumbent not less on the laity than on the clergy. They insisted on the universal priesthood of believers; but this idea, which undeniably has its foundation in Scripture, was turned by them into a weapon of attack against the existing organisation of the Church, and especially against the bishops. The layman, if he be pneumatic, has the right to dispense the sacraments, and, if he leaves the exercise of this right to appointed ministers, it is from respect, not to a Divine, but to a merely human ordinance.

5. In accordance with the rigorism in their prohibition of flight, the Montanists pronounced some sins mortal, and in this world unpardonable, for which the Catholic Church was

[1] According to Tertullian, the period of the Law and the Prophets was the *infantia* [of the Church]; that of Christ and the Apostles, *juventus*; and that of the Paraclete, *maturitas*.

disposed to grant absolution to the penitent. Among these there was specially included the sin of denying Christ in time of persecution; but it is necessary to remember that, in the controversy which broke out on this subject, the question was not whether everlasting perdition was the necessary consequence of such sin, but whether it was competent for the Church to receive again to its communion a person who had been guilty of it, even although he gave all the evidence of true repentance that men could require. The Montanists may have had their doubts, but they do not appear to have positively taught that those who had committed any of the sins which they pronounced mortal were cut off for ever from the hope of mercy. As hope was a flower which grew outside of the old earthly paradise, it might also grow outside of the new paradise planted in this world, as Irenæus called it; it might spring up and gladden the heart of the outcast within sight of the Montanists' flaming sword.

But the extreme severity of the Montanists—a righteousness which an able writer like Tertullian could not but perceive to exceed that of Christ and His apostles—required a theoretical justification. Some things that were tolerated under the older dispensations were declared unlawful by Christ, and, in like manner, some things that the apostles had at least tolerated were forbidden by the Paraclete, who, however, even on the moral territory, disclosed nothing absolutely new, but merely developed the work of human regeneration in accordance with everlasting principles. But even he, the Paraclete Himself, like Moses and Christ and the apostles, showed some indulgence to the weakness of the flesh by way of accommodation. In strictness, and in conformity with the mind of Christ correctly understood, he might not only have imposed the prohibition of a second marriage, but have forbidden marriage altogether. For the flesh has no moral claims; everything in which it is indulged is a mere concession. Because the end is not yet, concession is still made; but, because the end is near, concession is reduced to the lowest degree. We have, then, through the Paraclete, only the development and completion of earlier revelations, which proceeded in the old lines, and naturally became more holy and rigid as the consummation of all things

approached. But the heresy of Montanism, if it can properly be spoken of as heretical at all, lay chiefly in this, that the development itself was represented as Divine and authoritative, and it was laid down as the indisputable duty of believers to observe conscientiously the new commandment of the Paraclete.

Montanism had something of the character of a revival. It was the first great reaction, while the Church was still young, against a widespread lukewarmness and worldliness, and especially against the slothful, if not the scoffing spirit of the multitude of believers who no longer cherished the lively expectation of the *parousia* of Christ, which had been so general in the first days, but said, "The Lord delayeth His coming," forgetting that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. It is not wonderful that, in these circumstances, many should be dissatisfied with themselves, dissatisfied with the Church, dissatisfied with the episcopal rulers, who were now consolidating their power. But here were enthusiasts, who sought not only to recall the lost ideal, but, in view of the approaching end, and under the inspiration of the Paraclete, to make Christianity holier and purer than in the days of the apostles. Their ecstasies, their zeal, their rigorism, and even their spiritual pride, were fitted to gain them adherents far and wide, and possibly the fear of those Gnostic speculations by which the objective truths of Christianity were subverted had a powerful influence with not a few, and induced them to embrace or favour a system in which the objectivity of Christianity, and particularly the doctrine of the *parousia*, was made to absorb the thought and energy of the individual.

There may be, then, much to condemn in Montanism, but it is scarcely fair to ascribe its origin and progress to the mere love of excitement and change, unprovoked by anything wrong or defective among the professors of Christianity generally. Hagenbach's language, for example, is somewhat one-sided. "Has not at all times a rigid way of life," he says, "especially when it arms itself with prophetic, enthusiastic speech, and turns itself against the existing order of things, produced a mighty impression on the multitude? To observe with all wisdom and patience the quiet course of God

in history, and to follow its traces even where the natural eye perceives only a natural succession of events, belongs only to the man who has been exercised and trained in spiritual things. The mass loves the astounding, the thoroughgoing, the uncompromising; and hence the extraordinary outpourings, the improvised prophecies, of a heated and extravagant imagination, supported by an energetic will, have ever imposed more on the rude mind than the harmonious exhibition of a calm and simple piety. Montanism is not an isolated phenomenon. Distrust of science, contempt for heathen literature, hostility to art and culture, a bold disregard of established social relations and forms, a rough exterior, a constant prominence given to repentance, coupled with predictions of fearful judgments—such marks the Montanists have in common not only with the different sects of the Middle Ages, and the Anabaptists of the age of the Reformation, but, more or less, with the Puritans of England and the Camisards of France, and the many 'awakened' (so-called) of more recent and most recent times."[1]

It must be stated, however, that, while Hagenbach expresses himself so very unfavourably of Montanism, and says further that extravagance in religion has at all times led to separation, if not to formal heresy, he has no hesitation in expressing also his disapproval of the action of the Catholic Church in ejecting the Montanists from her communion. And though the Montanists were in strictly doctrinal questions most zealous for the orthodox faith, to this it came. It was natural that in the region where Montanism was most warmly received it was also most vehemently opposed. Various synods appear to have deliberated on the subject; and, unless you regard that assembly of which we read in the sixteenth chapter of Acts as a synod, these are the first assemblies of the kind that we meet in ecclesiastical history, and are more ancient even than those convoked on the Easter Controversy. It is stated that, at several Asiatic synods, the Montanists were condemned, and it is even alleged that some of the bishops in that quarter of the world, considering the false prophets to be at the same time men possessed with devils,

[1] [*Kirchengesch.* 11te Vorlesung.]

proposed to have recourse to exorcism—a mode of treatment to which, it is unnecessary to say, the accused indignantly refused to submit. But at Rome there was long hesitation as to the course that should be pursued—whether the Montanists ought to be recognised or condemned—and, while there was oscillation in that Church which was already admitted to enjoy a *potior principalitas* ("pre-eminence," Irenæus), the Montanists, evidently after condemnation of them was pronounced by the Asiatic synods, applied to the confessors of Lyons, soliciting their intercession and influence. They, although they had no sympathy with the rigorism of the Montanists, wrote in the interests of peace both to Asia and to Rome, addressing the latter, as you remember, in a letter of which Irenæus was not only the bearer, but probably also the composer. Eleutherus, the Roman bishop of that time, appears to have been favourably impressed by the communication; but the adversaries of the Montanists again acquired the ascendency over him, and he concurred with the Asiatic synods, by which the Montanists were stamped as a sect, and driven to the formation of a separate Church. Had this extreme measure not been resorted to, they might, in the opinion of the author I quoted above, who is so far from sympathising with them, have proved as salt within the Catholic community, where, at the same time, their extravagances would have been moderated by the salutary influences with which they were surrounded. And, while the enthusiastic party would have found bridle and reins in the great Church, the great Church might, on the other hand, have profited by that party's sharp use of the spur.

Note.—There would have been a true idea in Montanism had it dated the age of the Paraclete from Pentecost. Greater moral strictness was to be expected from that time. The Montanists misinterpreted Christ's words, "Ye cannot bear them now," forgetting that the Spirit was to take of Christ's and to bring to remembrance what He had said.

Cast out of the Church, the Montanists fell asunder into different sects, and Roman Catholic writers in particular do not fail to notice that, when once separation begins, subdivision ensues as the natural and usual result.

Among these parties there are mentioned several which bear odd names, expressive of their singularities. There were

the "Artotyrites," so called because they used cheese in the observance of the Supper, and the "Taskodrungites," so-called because they were wont to apply the forefinger to the nose as a sign of attention.[1] There was another party, however, which bore a truly distinguished name, derived from the man who gave full and eloquent expression to Montanistic ideas—the Tertullianists, who maintained a separate existence for some generations, but returned to the mother-Church in the time of Augustine.

Montanism was itself mainly a reaction, and, as commonly happens, a reaction towards the other extreme was produced by it. But the question arises: "Was the reaction produced by Montanism excessive, evil, and dangerous only without, and not also within, the Catholic Church?" Roman Catholic writers cannot be expected to admit the latter. The reaction which was caused, where it tended or went, that is, to an extreme, they see in such a sect as the Alogi. These, in opposition to the Montanistic claim of special inspiration in the fourth stage of human development (Nature, Law, Gospel, Paraclete), held that the prophetic gift had been bestowed solely under the Old Testament dispensation, and, while the Montanists appealed to the Gospel of John in support of their doctrine of the Paraclete, and to the Revelation of John—to it, at least, more than to any other book—in support of their Chiliastic views, the Alogi rejected both these works, denying the Divinity of Christ and the doctrine of the union of the Divine Logos with human nature.[2]

But a reaction, and an excessive reaction of a vastly more serious kind, not, indeed, affecting more vital doctrines, but of greater historical importance, took place within the Church. Montanism may justly be viewed as holding a prominent place among the causes that led to the growth of priestly and hierarchical power. To this result it contributed indirectly indeed, but not the less effectually. Let it be admitted that

[1] Their name is derived from [σασκός, "a little stake," and] δρουγγος, a word belonging, according to Epiphanius, to the dialect of Galatia. Blunt describes them as "a sect of Montanist Mystics, who made Divine worship to consist chiefly in silent meditation, of which the gesture from which they took their name was a symbol."—[*Dict. of Sects, Heresies, and Schools of Thought*, s. v.] They were identical with the Passalorynchitæ.

[2] Hence their ambiguous name, for which they are indebted to Epiphanius.

evils existed in the Church against which it was a duty to protest, and that there were truths lost sight of which it was desirable to bring into the foreground; let it be admitted, further, that language which to a calm reader seems extravagant, is natural and pardonable in the heat of the controversy; nay, many good Protestants acknowledge that some of the Reformers—that Luther himself—adopted, at times, in speaking not merely of opinions but of persons, language which, when all allowance is made for the ardour of battle, still remains unjustifiable. But to meet error and declension in strong and sometimes extravagant and indefensible language is a very different thing from meeting it with extravagant and indefensible principles. Had the Montanists only become at times vehement and impetuous in speech, they might assuredly have proved the salt of the Church; but, by advancing spiritual pretensions, and principles of order and discipline which were equally untenable, they inevitably gave a powerful impulse to the ecclesiastical and hierarchical movement which had begun in the days of Ignatius. The doctrine of the general priesthood of believers, to which the Montanists had given extreme prominence, and from which they had drawn dangerous conclusions, was thrown into the background, and the official dignity and authority of the appointed ministers of religion were exaggerated. In opposition to the Montanistic principle that the holiness of the Church depended on the moral strictness of its members, there began to obtain wider recognition of the other principle, that the holiness of the Church depended on the possession of the sacraments. In a word, both Montanism and Gnosticism, which were essentially opposed to each other, produced a reaction in favour of a firm Episcopal constitution and the authority of Catholic and Apostolic tradition.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE CHRISTIANS AND THE ROMAN POWER—COMMODUS AND SEVERUS.

WE now return to the history of the Roman persecution, which, as we have seen, had some connection with the development of Montanism.

On the death of Marcus Aurelius and the accession of his son Commodus, who affected the gladiator more than the philosopher, and was one of the most monstrously cruel rulers that ever lived, the Christians enjoyed comparative rest, a circumstance which is ascribed to the new Emperor's concubine, Marcia, whom he treated long as his wife, and who, for some reason or other, was favourably disposed toward the Christians. At this time, it is stated, some of the richest and most considerable men in Rome went over to Christianity, but it is also recorded by the same authority—Eusebius—that a senator named Apollonius was executed as a Christian along with the accuser, his slave, the one being beheaded, and the other suffering death by the breaking of his limbs. The influence of Marcia had led to no change in the law as it had been laid down in Trajan's rescript, and, at the same time, as appears from this incident, the life of the slave who accused his master, as well as of the Christian who was accused, was extremely uncertain and precarious. But, while the disposition of the Emperor to spare the Christians did not, as can be shown from more incidents than the one just recorded, ensure an absolute cessation, it naturally caused a great mitigation, of persecution.

Under Septimius Severus, who came forth triumphant from the civil war which followed the murder of Commodus (192 A.D.), it seemed at first as if still brighter days were dawning. According to Tertullian—and, whether true or not,

this must have been widely believed—Severus received into his palace a Christian named Proculus, who had cured him of an illness. Him the Emperor kept constantly by his side, also protecting a considerable number of Christians in the capital who would otherwise have been the victims of the popular rage. In some provinces, however, even during the ten first years of Severus, during which he was favourable to the new religion, persecution broke out; and now, as many of the Christians had begun to redeem themselves with money, it was not unlikely to spread through the cupidity of governors as well as the fanaticism of the multitude.

But a change came over the Emperor himself about the year 202 A.D., and then there was begun by him a persecution so severe that many of the Christians imagined the reign of Antichrist to be at hand. It is impossible to determine with certainty the causes to which the change in the sentiment and disposition of Septimius Severus is to be ascribed, but an occurrence took place about that time which has led some to suppose that here again we may discern the bitter fruit of Montanistic extravagance. The occurrence was at all events the occasion of the first decidedly Montanistic production that came from the pen of the prolific, indefatigable, fiery African who is generally designated the "Father of Western theology."

It is not known where the occurrence took place, but it is believed, on probable grounds, that it was at Carthage. The occasion was the distribution of a donation which the liberality of the Emperor granted to the soldiers. According to custom, each of the soldiers advanced crowned with laurel to receive his share of the sum; but a Christian, whose conscience forbade him to wear the crown on his head, came up for his portion carrying it in his hand—an act which caused no little commotion. He was regarded as guilty of insubordination. Having been brought before the tribune of his legion and questioned as to the motives of his conduct, he openly avowed that he was a Christian, and declared that, as such, he held it unlawful for him to wear a crown upon his brow. The matter came before the prefect, and the soldier was sent to prison, where he expected, as it was expressed, "the diadem of Christ"—that is, the martyr's crown. Nothing else could

be expected by a man who had not only been guilty of insubordination as a soldier, but had made a public profession of an illegal religion.

This was a person after Tertullian's own heart, a true soldier of God, faithful to Him when so many of his brethren in arms imagined that they could serve two masters. But, according to Tertullian, a multitude of Christians disapproved of the conduct of the soldier as that of a misguided, vain, obtrusive puritan, who brought disgrace on the name by which he was called, and endangered the peace which hitherto had been generally enjoyed under Severus by the professors of the faith. But this disapproval by the multitude, Tertullian maintained, was quite in keeping with their treatment of the new prophets, the Cataphrygians. It was the same Holy Spirit as had inspired the oracles delivered in the last days that had inspired that soldier with the heroic courage of the martyr. "I know the shepherds," Tertullian exclaims of those who thus put contempt on the operations of the Spirit; "they are lions in time of peace, stags in the hour of battle." In opposition to those who disapproved of the conduct of the soldiers, he undertakes to defend it in his work *De Corona*, labouring to show that the wearing of a crown is not only opposed to the genius of Christianity, and to the spirit which the contemplation of Christ's sufferings and death ought to produce, but unnatural and idolatrous.

Tertullian has often excited wonder by the extraordinary way in which he heaps together arguments good and bad. The marvel is that a man who reasons so well on one page should reason so ill on another. In this particular treatise, however, it is much easier to find examples of bad reasoning than of good. The reasoning, for instance, by which he attempts to show that it is unnatural to wear a crown would, were it not preserved to us, be inconceivable in a man of his undoubted gifts. "What enjoyment," he asks, "comes from flowers? Either fragrance or colour, or both together. And what are the senses of fragrance and colour, and what are the organs for these senses? The nose and the eye. It is therefore unnatural to put a garland of flowers upon the head. Put it on your breast, on your bed, or on your cup, if you will, but why on the head, where neither the colour can be

seen nor the fragrance enjoyed? You may as well bring food to the ear, or address sounds to the nose."

But on this branch of his subject Tertullian uses also an argument which, though it would hardly convince those who condemned the soldier, at least looks somewhat more rational. The wearing of a crown, he contends, is an act of treason against God, the Lord and Creator of nature. "Doth not even nature itself teach a man that, if he wears a crown, he is putting dishonour on the Divine majesty? Such vanities were abjured in baptism, when we renounced the pomp of the devil and his angels." Tertullian does not end his treatise without adducing considerations which do not indeed establish his point, but which, if his point were otherwise established, would be very powerfully used in inculcating and encouraging to obedience. He points, on the one hand, to the crown of thorns, and, on the other, to the crown of glory. If he has not satisfied the understanding, he knows how to take hold of the two most powerful handles by which the will of man is moved—gratitude and hope.

I have dwelt on the incident of the soldier and the work which it evoked because Tertullian's Montanistic tendencies were now fully developed and declared, and because at this time also the Emperor appears as an active persecutor, issuing an edict by which both Jews and Christians were forbidden under the severest penalties to proselytise. It is possible that not only the Montanistic rigorism, manifesting itself in such a way as has just been indicated, but the Montanistic millenarianism—the enthusiastic preaching of the thousand years' reign—which might easily be represented, with or without malignity, as politically dangerous, may have had its influence on Severus. The edict which he issued contained, indeed, no express command to persecute those who were already Christians, but it gave too plain evidence of a hostile disposition; and the popular rage, which was continually demanding fresh victims, gave it, as might be expected, the widest extension, and indulged itself, at least in some quarters, without restraint.

The chief suffering was in Africa, both in Egypt and in Carthage and the neighbourhood (proconsular Africa). In the former country, Leonides, the father of the celebrated

Origen, was put to death. As in the history of the Lyonese persecution, so here, and, as we shall see, at Carthage also, some women were conspicuous at once for their gentleness and for their fortitude. The case of Potamiæna at Alexandria is extremely interesting (Eus. vi. 5). After she had been tortured in a variety of ways, she was condemned to the flames, and her body was destroyed from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head by the application of boiling pitch.[1] A certain Basilides, who had led her off to death, and had protected her from the insults and abuse of the mob, was so deeply impressed by the meekness and stedfastness of the virgin, that he could not free himself from the thought of her agonies and her noble devotion. Three days after the execution, the glorified form of the sufferer appeared to him in a dream, and put a crown upon his head, uttering the words: "I have prayed to the Lord for thee and obtained thy salvation." He became a Christian, and soon had the opportunity of making a public confession, and of confirming his confession by his death. Happening to be involved in some litigation, he was required to take an oath by the gods. He refused, declaring that he was a Christian. Persisting in his declaration, which for a time seemed incredible, he was cast into prison, and the day after he was beheaded.

It is related that others were converted in a similar manner. And who will affirm it to be a thing impossible that the motions of the Divine Spirit should be felt when young men literally see visions and old men dream dreams? That myriads of spiritual beings walk the earth unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep, may or may not be true: that among those myriads are the spirits of such as have fallen asleep, may be thought an idle imagination: but that the departed appear in dreams to the living and speak to them is a thing which I suppose most men can attest from their own experience. Often are the words literally verified, "I sleep, but my heart waketh," going, it may be, after its covetousness or after its lust, and—what shall hinder us from believing it!—going sometimes after the God who made it and who seeks it. "Most men," said Tertullian, doubtless thinking

[1] ἀπ' ἄκρων ποδῶν καὶ μέχρι κορυφῆς ἠρίμα καὶ κατὰ βραχύ.

chiefly of Montanistic ecstasies, "are brought to God by visions." That is an extreme view, but I see nothing in the nature of man, or in any rational—I may even say, rationalistic—view of religion that should drive us to the opposite extreme, and make us reject *à priori* every narrative of conversion by a dream as a pure invention. We cannot tell how often it may have happened during these three thousand years and more that a man, on raising his head from his pillow, whether of stone or of down, has not had cause to say: "Surely the Lord was in this place and I knew it not."

Blunt says: "In no part of the world did it" (persecution) "rage more fiercely than in the region of Alexandria. It is, perhaps, by taking this circumstance into account that we get one key to the obscure and mysterious works of Clemens Alexandrinus, who wrote about this time. He evidently composed under entire constraint; a constraint, no doubt, in a great measure arising from the character of the readers he was addressing, educated and fastidious heathens, whom he hoped to approach with better chance of success if he disguised the Christian Teacher in the Philosopher, and Christianity in Philosophy. Still there appears to be a reserve in him even greater than this would explain. He speaks like one afraid to hear the sound of his own voice. Indeed, he almost says as much. 'He dares not write at full,' says he, 'lest he should be found casting pearls before swine, who would trample them under their feet, and then turn again and rend you.' The scheme of his principal book is desultory, confused, without system, expressly in order that the meaning of it should be deciphered with difficulty; a scheme suggested in some degree by the dangerous times in which his lot was cast, when he himself 'saw daily before his very eyes abundant spectacles of martyrs burned, crucified, beheaded;' their conviction effected by the ordinary test of a challenge to deny the Saviour."[1]

But Clement, we remember, was the head of a catechetical school and a presbyter. His obscurity was no doubt caused by his allegorising and metaphysical tendencies.

About the time that Potamiæna and others suffered at Alexandria, the persecution raged in Proconsular Africa, where,

[1] [J. J. Blunt, *The Church in the Three First Centuries*, p. 302.]

however, two or three years before the Emperor's edict was issued, some Christians were executed because, like Basilides, they would not swear by the gods. But after the appearance of the edict, Carthage, already conspicuous, and destined to become still more conspicuous, in the history of the Church, contributed to the noble army names of both men and women whose memory is still treasured—names, too, of persons who at the time of their apprehension were only catechumens, not yet having undergone the rite by which the world, with its pomp and idols, was formally renounced. Of these it may be sufficient to notice the two of whose sufferings we have the fullest account—Perpetua and Felicitas. The two are frequently characterised as Montanists, but they were Montanists not yet separated from the Catholic Church.

Perpetua was the daughter of a man who belonged to the higher ranks, and who, though he had not yet renounced the pagan religion, probably felt no deep attachment to it, as he does not appear to have used his authority in order to prevent his wife and his children from embracing Christianity. Perpetua was about twenty-two years of age. She had enjoyed the highest culture of her native city, was already married and the mother of a child, whom she took with her to her prison, at once her consolation and her sorrow. Not yet connected with the Church by the outward rite, she seemed bound to this earthly life by the strongest and tenderest ties. Felicitas had not so many of the things that make death terrible, but the two, partakers of a common captivity and a common hope, felt themselves to be one, and showed equal firmness and devotion. The father of Perpetua made repeated efforts to bring her to a recantation, entreating her to spare herself the pain, and him the shame, of a public execution. Pointing to a vessel lying before them, "I cannot," said she, "call that vessel anything else than what it is. No more can I say anything else than that I am a Christian." She had adopted the principle of the great Montanist to whom Carthage owes something of its fame. It is not indeed a principle peculiar to Montanists, but Tertullian said to the Catholics whom he supposed to have generally forgotten it: "I know of no moral necessity but one, and that is, not to sin." After a few days, in the course of which clergymen found admission

and administered baptism to the catechumens, the captives were consigned to a dark, miserable apartment, the lighter restraint to which they had previously been subjected being for some reason or other considered insufficient. Perpetua had no thought of abjuring, but for a time the joy of suffering for her Lord forsook her. She could not help shuddering. She had never been in such darkness. The excessive heat caused by the number of the prisoners, the harsh treatment of the soldiers, and the child on whom she could not cease to have compassion, all combined to embitter her suffering, and she could not but pray, though in perfect submission, that the cup might speedily pass from her. If she afterwards called her prison her palace, it was not that dungeon, but another room obtained by the money of the deacons, ever ready to minister as best they could to those who were in prison. Again the Christians were separated from the crowd of criminals with whom they had been shut up together, and now they were allowed to hold intercourse with their friends. Perpetua was all cheerfulness and joy. She had a dream, which reminds us partly of Bethel and partly of Mahanaim, and which is all the more likely to be truly recorded that it reminds us of both. She saw a ladder of wondrous height, reaching up to heaven, but so narrow that he who would climb must climb alone; and on the sides of the ladder, before each step, iron instruments were fixed,—swords, spears, knives, and hooks,—so that if one was heedless, and did not constantly turn his eye upwards, he was wounded and torn. And, moreover, at the foot of the ladder lay a huge dragon, which ever sought to terrify the climber, that he might look back and fall. This was the dream of one whose baptism had been followed by sore temptation, and whose short life was soon to end with the second baptism, the baptism of blood.

Before the trial, Perpetua's father once more besought her to recant. He kissed her hands and fell at her feet. But she could only answer that her life was not in her own hand, but in God's. When she appeared before the proconsul, Hilarianus, he too entreated her to have pity on her grey-haired father and her helpless child. It was hard to climb the narrow ladder with such swords and spears by its sides,

but she held fast, looking, not to the foot, where lay the dragon, but to the top, which was high in the Divine faithfulness. Along with her fellow-prisoners, who all made the same confession, saying, "We are Christians," she was condemned to be thrown to the wild beasts. The sentence was to be executed at an approaching festival, which was to be held in commemoration of the day on which, several years before, the Emperor's son Geta had been received to the dignity of Cæsar. It happened that, between the sentence and the day fixed for its execution, one of the prisoners sickened and died, and Felicitas, when suffering excruciating pain, was told that what she bore was nothing to what awaited them in the amphitheatre. "What I suffer now," she said, "I suffer, but then another will suffer for me." An exquisite piece of cruelty was devised to render the barbarous spectacle more attractive to the heathen. It was arranged that the condemned should meet the wild beasts—the men clothed as priests of Saturn, the women as priestesses of Ceres. Perpetua spoke for the company, saying: "For this very reason do we voluntarily give ourselves to death, that we may not be obliged to do anything heathenish." The tribune who was present yielded,—*agnovit injustitia justitiam*, it is said in the African Acts,—and the prisoners, having given one another the kiss of peace, entered the amphitheatre as they had come from the place of their confinement.

I need not give the details of the barbarous scene which followed. Various particulars are recorded, but I shall only mention that Perpetua, still living, but gored and bleeding, was borne to the gate of the amphitheatre, and was there met by a catechumen named Rusticus. She seemed as one awaking out of sleep, and, looking up brightly, she inquired, to the astonishment of all, "When am I to be thrown to the wild beasts?" She could not believe that the conflict was over till she saw the signs of it on her body and her clothes, and yet, in the midst of it, she not only had helped her companion Felicitas, who had been thrown down, to rise, but had been seen again and again arranging her hair, probably scarcely conscious that she was doing so, but doing it, says the record, putting on the act a construction which is natural

and beautiful, "that she might not seem to be in mourning when so near her crown."

The bones of the martyrs were buried in the principal church, and the day of Geta's festival continued to be celebrated, not in his memory, but in memory of those catechumens whose baptism in the prison, followed so soon by their bloody death, was a φωτισμός, spreading a light in which multitudes have rejoiced as glorifying to Him who has chosen the weak to confound the mighty.

I have not usually detained you with external events that have no direct bearing on the history of the Church, but I may mention that there was a people which provoked the wrath of Severus vastly more than the Christians, and which, toward the end of his life, he resolved to root utterly out of the earth. It was the Caledonians, among whom he had spread devastation without being able to subjugate or to restrain them, and among whom he sent a new army, giving orders for their extermination. "Fingal," runs the account of Gibbon, "is said to have commanded the Caledonians in that memorable juncture, to have eluded the power of Severus, and to have obtained a signal victory on the banks of the Carun, in which he caused the son of the King of the World, Caracul, to flee from his arms along the fields of his pride. Something of a doubtful mist still hangs over these Highland traditions; but if we could, with safety, indulge the pleasing supposition that Fingal lived, and that Ossian sung, the striking contrast of the situation and manners of the contending nations might amuse a philosophic mind. The parallel would be little to the advantage of the more civilised people, if we compared the unrelenting revenge of Severus with the generous clemency of Fingal; the timid and brutal cruelty of Caracalla, with the bravery, the tenderness, the elegant genius of Ossian; the mercenary chiefs, who, from motives of fear or interest, served under the Imperial standard, with the free-born warriors who started to arms at the voice of the King of Morven; if, in a word, we contemplated the untutored Caledonians, glowing with the warm virtues of nature, and the degenerate Romans, polluted with the mean vices of wealth and slavery."[1]

[1] *Decline and Fall*, chap. vi.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE CHRISTIANS AND THE ROMAN POWER—FROM CARACALLA TO PHILIP.

CARACALLA, who had plotted against his father's life and had been forgiven,—an instance of mercy, it is said, more fatal to the Empire than a long series of cruelties,—soon succeeded in getting rid of his brother Geta, to whom, from childhood, he had been a mortal enemy. In an apartment in which the widow of Severus had arranged for the meeting and reconciliation of her two sons, seemingly with the hearty concurrence of both, the elder, Caracalla, caused the younger to be assassinated in her presence. He was covered with his blood. The eminent lawyer Papinian, prætorian prefect, was commanded to write an apology for the monstrous deed. "It is easier to commit a parricide than to justify one," was Papinian's reply, for which he was put to death. As he had abundant reason to anticipate the penalty, we may regret that his fidelity to his principles was not hallowed by Christianity, but we cannot refuse to acknowledge it as a proof that in the heathen world God had not left Himself without witness in man's moral nature as well as in the outward universe. Another eminent personage was put to death for a witticism. He had suggested that the Emperor, who took the names of several conquered nations, should add the title of "Geticus." Twenty thousand persons perished in a proscription as friends of Geta, and soon the rapine and savage cruelty of this fratricide wasted the remotest provinces, and made his name more detestable than that of Nero. But, as was the case with so many of the worst Emperors, he did not turn his fury against the Christians. Tertullian, who is the authority for the statement that Severus kept in the palace a Christian who had once wrought a cure on him, tells us that Caracalla's nurse had likewise belonged to the Church, and to this he ascribes the circumstance that the persecutions gradually

ceased under his reign. But, though the Christians were spared as such, it is not easy to admire Tertullian's words as applied to such a savage tyrant: "Lacte Christiano educatus" ["Brought up on the milk of Christianity"]. This Emperor, who had as much of the milk of the wolf in his veins as any man who had reigned in Rome from the days of Romulus, was assassinated when he was on a pilgrimage to the famous Temple of the Moon at Carrhæ. Macrinus, the prætorian prefect, who, to save his own life, had instigated the murder, succeeded, and during his short reign of fourteen or eighteen months, likewise left the Christians in peace. He is even said to have issued an edict forbidding that anyone should be condemned for the crime of despising the gods. Like his predecessor and so many others who had ruled from the days of Julius, Macrinus died a violent death in consequence of dissatisfaction among the troops.

He was succeeded by a sovereign who furnishes perhaps the most odious example of precocious wickedness known in history. His original name was Varius Avitus Bassianus, but he is commonly known by the name Heliogabalus. He took, moreover, the titles of Augustus and Antoninus. The reign of this youth, which began when he was fourteen years of age, and ended within four years, presents an unparalleled union of fantastic folly, fanatic superstition, and bestial indecency. "Had he been satisfied," says Professor Ramsay, "with supping on the tongues of peacocks and nightingales, with feeding lions on pheasants and parrots, with assembling companies of guests who were all fat, or all lean, or all tall, or all short, or all bald, or all gouty, and regaling them with mock repasts; had he been content to occupy his leisure hours in solemnising the nuptials of his favourite deity[1] with the Trojan Pallas or the African Urania, and in making matches between the gods and goddesses all over Italy, men might have laughed good-naturedly, anticipating an increase of wisdom with increasing years. But unhappily even these trivial amusements were not unfrequently accompanied with cruelty and bloodshed. . . . The Roman populace would

[1] In his native city, Emesa, he had been priest of Elagabalus, the Syro-Phœnician sun-god: hence his name.

with easy toleration have admitted and worshipped a new divinity, but they beheld with disgust their Emperor appearing in public, arrayed in the attire of a Syrian priest, dancing wild measures and chanting barbaric hymns; they listened with horror to the tales of magic rites, and of human victims secretly slaughtered; they could scarcely submit without indignation to the ordinance that an outlandish idol should take precedence of their fathers' gods and of Jupiter himself, and still less could they consent to obey the decree subsequently promulgated, that it should not be lawful to offer homage at Rome to any other celestial power." The blackest of his offences, however, are "too horrible and too disgusting to admit of description."[1]

He instituted a senate of ladies, which was presided over by his mother, Julia Soëmias, and legislated on questions of fashion. He had brought to Rome the black stone in which the sun-god was adored at Emesa, and, when the magnificent temple in which it was set was consecrated, human victims were offered in sacrifice. According to the testimony of a heathen writer (Lampridius)—this must have been before the promulgation of the decree spoken of by Professor Ramsay—he had conceived the design of fusing the Jewish, Samaritan, and Christian religions into one, putting himself at the head of the worshippers as their high priest. At all events, the fury of this obscene savage was not turned against the Christians, and, moreover, it cannot be doubted that, by his introduction of those foreign rites, he struck as fatal a blow at the old State-religion as it had ever sustained. He was a base instrument used by Providence in preparing for the great victory of the Cross which was to be achieved within a century after his death. He too was murdered in a rising of the soldiers. His corpse was beheaded, dragged through the streets, and cast into the Tiber, and in bitter scorn the people gave him the posthumous nickname of "Tiberinus."

In the year 222 A.D., the Roman Empire was once more governed by a noble and illustrious man, Alexander Severus, the cousin of Heliogabalus. He cleansed the court, which had become a cage of foul birds, honoured the senate, which his

[1] [Art. "Elagabalus" in Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*.]

predecessor had brought into contempt, and—which was probably most difficult of all—restored discipline in the army. He too was noted for his syncretism in religion. In his lararium, or domestic chapel, there stood, along with the family gods, the images of Orpheus and Apollonius, and Absalom and Christ. It is manifest from this, that, when it is reported of him, as it is on good authority,[1] that he intended to erect a temple to Christ, we cannot conclude that he had any clear conception of what Christ is to His followers, but merely that he considered Him entitled to public worship along with other divinities. The great principle of Christian morals, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them," he caused to be written on the walls of his palace and of other public buildings, and he was frequently heard repeating it. He had probably learned it from his mother Mammæa, who, when at Antioch, had sent for the great Origen, and conversed with him on Christianity. That the attachment of the Emperor to the new religion, however, was not profound is evident, it is said, from the fact that, in the collection of laws published at his decree by his friend Ulpian, the rescripts of former emperors against the Christians were retained. But they could not have been rigidly enforced, for about this time Christian churches were erected in different places.[2]

The Thracian Maximin, by whom Alexander Severus was murdered, and who succeeded to the Empire (235 A.D.), persecuted the Christians—from hatred, it is said, more of his predecessor than of them. But in Pontus and Cappadocia there had been devastating earthquakes, by which, as so often before, the rage of the populace had been inflamed against the Atheists—though that was a name for the followers of Christ which was going out of use. To this reign is frequently, though not always, assigned the legend of Ursula, which, when assailed unmercifully by the first Protestant historians, was honoured with an entire folio, dedicated to its defence by the Jesuit Father Crombach.[3] The legend cannot

[1] That of Lampridius.

[2] The building of churches dates from the time of Caracalla.

[3] [*Ursula Vindicata.* The origin of the legend is discussed by Schade, *Die Saga von der heiligen Ursula.*]

be traced further back than 1100 A.D. Ursula, daughter of the British king, Deonatus, was sought in marriage by a heathen prince, Holofernes, and agreed to accept him on the two conditions that he should become a Christian and that she should be allowed three years to make a pilgrimage to Rome with her maidens. Including herself, the travellers were eleven in number, and each was attended by a thousand companions, who were gathered from all parts of the world. On their way home, they were massacred by Huns at Cologne. The Huns were immediately afterwards, on the prayer of the martyrs, smitten by a host of angels, and the inhabitants of Cologne, grateful to the eleven thousand intercessors to whom they owed their deliverance, erected a church in their honour on the spot where there still stands a church known by the name of St. Ursula. Roman Catholic writers now admit that the legend contains embellishment and exaggeration. They admit, for instance, that the number is improbable, and that it may have originated in the misinterpretation of *Undecim M. Vs.* (M. signifying, not *millia*, but *martyres*). The companions are sometimes reduced to one—Ursula et Undecimilla.[1]

The persecutions under Maximin the Thracian were partial in extent, being waged chiefly in Cappadocia and Pontus, where the proconsul Serenianus is named as being harsh and violent in the administration of the old laws. In the other parts of the Empire the Christians enjoyed tranquillity, which was continued under the two following Emperors, Gordianus (238–244 A.D.), and Philip the Arabian (244–249 A.D.). The latter, indeed, was so far from being a persecutor, that legend, exaggerating in a way of which we have had similar instances, represented him as actually a Christian. According to Eusebius (vi. 34), he desired to take part in the sacred services of the Christians on the night before Easter, but the bishop of the community, showing a fidelity and courage of which there were afterwards well accredited examples both in the west and in the east, declared to him, probably with reference to the murder of Gordian, that, on account of the load of guilt which lay upon him, he could not be permitted to take part in the celebration unless he did penance; to which, it is stated, the Emperor willingly submitted. The utmost

[1] ["Undecimilla" being taken as the name of the companion.]

that can be established, however, is that Philip showed himself favourable to the Christians, and it may be conjectured that his religious principles were, like those of Alexander Severus and others, of an eclectic character, which of course might easily give occasion to misunderstanding. From the language of Origen in his writing against Celsus, we learn that at this period, though it cannot be said that any Emperor had yet been converted, the leaven had been spreading far and wide and had reached classes which formerly, with few individual exceptions, had been hostile and indifferent. He admits that in the last times the number might easily be counted of those who had sealed their testimony with their blood; that God in His mercy had prevented a war of extermination. He speaks of the rapid increase in the numbers of the Christians, and of the boldness and publicity with which they declare themselves and celebrate their worship. They were now no longer a despised Jewish sect, but a religious communion, which could come forward as a considerable society, including now, as could not be said at any previous period, many of the rich and wise and mighty. And, while men in high position and office belonged to the Church, Christian teachers now stood in honour with not a few of those who remained without.[1]

But while he predicts the fall of the old religion and the triumph of the new, he seeks to warn his brethren in the faith against a sifting persecution which he sees approaching. The comparative rest which had been enjoyed for so long a time would be succeeded by a new outburst of violence as soon as the calumniators of Christianity had spread the opinion that the cause of the many revolts which took place in the Emperor's last years was the great multitude of Christians, who had grown so rapidly just because the persecutions had been interrupted. He was not apprehensive that the calumnies of the past—the *ἀθεότης*, the *θυεστεῖα δεῖπνα*, the *οἰδιπόδειοι μίξεις*—would be renewed; but the great tranquillity which had been enjoyed, with but local interruptions, from the days of Septimius Severus, the time at which the followers of Christ ventured to erect buildings for their worship, resembled,

[1] We may recall Origen's conversation at Antioch with Mammæa, the mother of Alexander Severus. Origen, too, corresponded with Philip and his wife Severa.

in his view, a sky that was not only serene but subtle, and in which the clouds would soon gather and burst in pitiless storm. The indications of the approaching day when the gospel would gain its great temporal triumph, might well inspire the fear that the enemy would come anew with great wrath.

The long repose had led to such an increase of members that, if paganism was not to succumb without a struggle, persecution might be dreaded. There is a second remark to be made here. The long repose had proved so relaxing that, according to the testimony of Christian writers themselves, persecution was needed. Already in the time of Tertullian, who died before the accession of Alexander Severus, the custom of buying off persecution had become common—a custom which, it is needless to say, he denounced in no measured terms, and which was indeed calculated to prove a most serious stumbling-block. There is no possibility, at least, of defending the *libellus* if, as there can be no reasonable doubt was the case, the document so-called asserted or implied that the holder of it had offered sacrifice and was consequently exempt from the penalty of the law.[1] These *libelli* might be issued, and were issued, in great number when there was no general or violent persecution. The imperial rescripts remaining unrepealed, a magistrate had only to write out an order that certain suspected persons, who were designated by name, should offer sacrifice to the gods, and thus give evidence that they were not Christians, but loyal subjects of the Empire; and the Christians challenged, if they were not disposed to make open denial of their faith, had the alternative of intimating—and this was frequently all that was wanted—that they were prepared to pay a sum of money if left in the free exercise of their own religion. In return they received these certificates, which could not possibly be a formal dispensation, and which no magistrate had it in his power to grant, but, as is both probable in itself, and confirmed by ancient testimony, a virtual declaration at least that they were not Christians. There were disciplinarians in the Church who contended that the guilt of the *libellatici* was as great as that of the *sacrificati* and the

[1] Cyprian mentions some who sought no *libellus*, but continued to be enrolled among those who had complied with the imperial edict.

thurificati,—those who sacrificed,—and that, if they were to get absolution on earth at all, neither class should receive it except in case of the immediate prospect of death.

But other proofs were not awanting that the long repose had become, as it was expressed, a Capua to those who should have endured hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. Blunt has condensed in one passage a variety of particulars, collected from different writings of Cyprian's. "Though the number of the Christians was now very great, and though many among them were of an affluent class, so that at Rome, even senators and knights, chief men and matrons, were found in their ranks; and, accordingly, though living to themselves, and thereby escaping the pollution which followed from intercourse with the heathen, was now more practicable, we discover them resorting to heathen courts; becoming members, as servants, of heathen households; forming heathen marriages; frequenting heathen spectacles, and even defending the practice, alleging that, in Scripture, Elijah is spoken of as the charioteer of Israel, and David represented as dancing before the ark; that even there we read of harps, and cymbals, and pipes; that the Apostle talks of wrestling against spiritual wickedness, of running a race, of winning a crown; and that a Christian (such was the notable argument) might surely behold what Scripture describes. Moreover, we find Christian women adorning themselves with the most costly decorations; virgins taking part in nuptial revels, and even resorting to baths frequented by both sexes; bishops of the Church abandoning their chairs, deserting their people, wandering through distant provinces, hunting after gain, possessing themselves of funds by fraudulent means, and swelling their amount by usurious practices. No wonder that God, whilst watching over His Church, should see fit to administer a sharp correction for abuses like these."[1]

But while these abuses existed and needed correction, we should probably err greatly if we inferred that the majority of Christians had fallen away in any lamentable degree from primitive love and purity and zeal. At all events, the Capua was followed not by ruinous disaster, but by purifying struggle and suffering, which were preparatory to final triumph.

[1] [J. J. Blunt, *The Church in the Three First Centuries*, p. 314.]

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE CHRISTIANS AND THE ROMAN POWER—DECIUS, GALLUS, VALERIAN, GALLIENUS, CLAUDIUS, AURELIAN.

THE partial and local persecutions of the earliest times had been succeeded by trials more extensive and severe in the time of Marcus Aurelius, and now came the third phase of the Roman persecutions—universal, systematic, ruthless, and (in their design) exterminating. It began soon after the elevation of Decius to the imperial throne in the year 249 A.D. Decius is described as a man of an earnest old-Roman nature, who was ambitious to become a second Trajan, and who believed that it was only by the maintenance of the old religion and the destruction of its enemies that the glory of the Empire could be restored, and established on a solid and durable basis. Had he lived a century later, some one has said, this patriotic sovereign would have shown no less energy for the maintenance of the Christian faith and the extirpation of paganism.

The year 250 A.D. is assigned as the date of the fatal edict—an edict so terrible that many believed the predicted time had now arrived when, if it were possible, the very elect would fall. By this edict it was required that the test of sacrificing to the gods should be applied to all persons suspected of being Christians. A time was fixed within which the Christians should appear before the magistrates and take part in the religious rites of the State. Of those who did fall away, it was noticed that some denied their faith with trembling and visible struggles, and others with a light, cheerful air, proving how very thin was the layer of earth on the rock where the seed had fallen. The property of fugitives was confiscated, and the penalty of death awaited them on their return.

Among the faithful who suffered death are mentioned

Fabianus, Bishop of Rome; Babylas, Bishop of Antioch; and Pionius, a presbyter of Smyrna. But it was not only great cities that were reached by the destroyer. His ravages extended to the remotest villages, and, according to Eusebius, there was not a road or alley where a Christian could walk by day or by night without imminent risk of being challenged to curse his Master, and, on his refusal, of being delivered up to death. We read, too, of many being detained in prison, and of some dying there of starvation. The object in not inflicting immediately the legal penalty of death was doubtless to bring the captives to a recantation; and, on the one hand, barbarous threats and tortures, and, on the other, tempting promises and blandishments were resorted to for this purpose. Origen was kept in prison for a time. Cyprian fled from Carthage and returned on the death of Decius, but his martyrdom was postponed only for seven years.

What must originally have been simply a poetic dress for the vast revolution which took place in the course of two hundred years from the time of Decius, came to be received by many as literal truth: I mean the legend of the Seven Sleepers. When many were fleeing to mountains and deserts, seven brothers took refuge in a cave near Ephesus, but were shut up by the heathen. Here they fell asleep, and they continued to sleep till the time of the younger Theodosius (447 A.D.). On awaking, they supposed they had slept only a few hours. They felt hungry, and one of their number was sent into the city to buy food. All was changed. Christian churches had been erected where once heathen temples had stood. The people were all strange, and they all gazed on him with wonder. The astonishment was increased when the Bishop, with a great multitude, repaired to the cave and beheld the rest of the brothers. And then the Seven sank into the arms of sleep's brother, as poets, ancient and modern, have called him.

The suffering appears to have been nowhere so great as in Alexandria, where, before the promulgation of the edict, the people had been excited by a certain soothsayer to vindicate the honour of their ancient gods. Men and women, it is said, were dragged forth from their houses and subjected to all kinds of indignities, till the whole city had the appearance

of a place taken by storm. The populace being in such a temper, the publication of the edict caused the greater dismay among the Christians. On this point, and in confirmation of certain particulars mentioned above, I may quote the language of Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria, which has been preserved by Eusebius (vi. 41):—

"All were in the utmost alarm; many of the most prominent in the Church went immediately of their own account to the judge; others were summoned and led off from their homes; others again were constrained to go by their kinsmen and friends. Called by name, they approached the unclean and unholy sacrifices, some pale and trembling, as if they were not to present, but were themselves to be presented as the victims of idols, so that they were laughed to scorn by the multitude who surrounded them as men too cowardly to die who still showed their cowardice in the performance of pagan rites. Others ran up willingly to the altars, and declared with much boldness that they had never been Christians. Some endured torture for a while, and then accepted deliverance by abjuring the faith. But the firm and blessed pillars of the Lord, supported by His strength, proved themselves admirable witnesses of His kingdom."

Decius perished in a battle against the Goths (251 A.D.). His body was lost in a morass and was never found. Under his successor Gallus, the calamities of the Empire rendered it difficult to carry through the plan of persecution, though now also there were not wanting martyrs, among whom the Roman bishops Cornelius and Lucius are particularly named as having been first banished and afterwards executed.

About this period a terrible plague broke out and spread far and wide, and there is too good reason for ascribing its virulence in great part to the carnage caused by the edict of Decius, which had tainted the atmosphere. Few of the great cities of the Empire were spared. At Rome itself the deaths are said to have amounted at one time to five thousand a day. At Alexandria, where the Christians had been so mercilessly slaughtered, the tremendous fury of the pestilence caused such desolation that, according to the testimony of Dionysius, there were fewer inhabitants of all ages than there had been previously above the age of forty.

But how did the Christians act both here and in other great cities? When the heathen fled in horror from the contagion, and abandoned their friends and relations in the hope of saving their own lives, those who for generations had been stigmatised as haters of mankind forgot their bitter wrongs and sufferings, and were unwearied in their care of the infected and the dying. "In this way," says Dionysius, "the best of the brethren departed this life." We may be assured that such self-devotion was as highly appreciated, and did as much for the spread of Christianity, as the heroic devotion of those who were burned, or beheaded, or cast to the lion, though this had made so profound an impression that even judges and executioners were led to profess the faith which once they sought to destroy. On the other hand, it must be admitted that there were still many who persisted in ascribing drought, famine, plague, defeat—every calamity, in short—to those who refused to sacrifice to the gods.

Valerian, however, who succeeded Hostilianus in 253 A.D., and reigned till 260 A.D., showed himself disposed to strengthen his government by conciliating the Christians, and is said by Eusebius to have had several of them in his palace. But, under the influence of his favourite Macrianus, and in consequence of thickening disasters, which made him superstitious and led him to have recourse to Egyptian soothsayers,[1] he issued an edict in 257 A.D. requiring that the assemblies of the Christians should be closed, and that the bishops should be banished if they refused to offer homage to the gods. This was followed in 258 A.D. by a more stringent one, to the effect that bishops, presbyters, and deacons should forthwith be executed; that senators and knights should lose their dignity and their goods, and should, if they persisted in the profession of Christianity, be punished with death; ladies of rank should, after confiscation of their goods, be banished; Christians at the imperial court should be treated as slaves and employed in servile labour at the various imperial estates.

The most celebrated victim of this persecution was Cyprian of Carthage; but it would seem that the first sufferers were

[1] Macrianus himself was a soothsayer.

the Roman bishop, Sixtus II., and four of his deacons, among whom was Laurentius. There is no reason for questioning the martyrdom of the last mentioned, but whether the legend that is associated with his name has a foundation in fact, it is impossible to decide. The Roman magistrate had heard of the treasures of the Church, and was desirous of obtaining possession of them. Laurentius was ordered to bring them, and, showing a readiness to comply, was let go for the purpose. He returned with a train of the poor and maimed. "These are our treasures," said he; and for this insolence, as it was considered, he was set on a hot iron chair and finally put to death.

After dwelling on the severe and systematic persecution of Decius, and the interruptions in the execution of his sanguinary projects which so soon followed, it may occur to you that the question which ought to be put is not why the persecution under Decius was extensive and systematic, but why, under the emperors generally, it had been so fitful, and why it had been interrupted for periods so long that the normal condition of the Christians—though, of course, from the state of the law they were never absolutely secure from violence and death—was one of tranquillity. The question is answered only in a very partial way by discriminating between emperors who were of Roman origin, and anxious to restore the old Roman virtue, and men like the Syrians Heliogabalus and Alexander Severus, and the Arabian Philip, or like the Roman Commodus, in whom there was nothing of the true Roman spirit. I have seen it remarked by a French author that persecution is not usually pushed with vigour where there is not a body of priests deeply interested in the maintenance of the established worship. They nourish the distrust and hatred borne by the multitude toward religious innovations, and, besieging the avenues of the throne, will not suffer the prince to forget what they consider the most sacred of duties. Now, of course the priests of the Empire were interested, like some other classes, in putting down Christianity, but not to such a degree as to engross their thoughts and energies. The ancient sacerdotal corporations were either destroyed or greatly weakened. The office of *pontifex maximus* was one among the many magistracies with which the Emperor was invested, and, as to the other priests, they were mostly old consuls, old

ediles, and even old generals, and they neither were united into an organised body nor derived any emoluments or privileges of importance from their position. Hence, in part, the intervals during which the Church rooted and grew, and hence also, in part, the cruel violence which was resorted to when persecution was rekindled.

Valerian having been taken captive in his unhappy war against the Persians was succeeded by his son Gallienus (260–268 A.D.). The new Emperor issued an edict of toleration, by which, after long suffering and tribulation, the Christian Church was for the first time recognised as a legally existing corporation in the Empire. He not only forbade further oppression and persecution of the Christians, but gave orders that the buildings and churches of which they had been robbed should be restored to them. After Gallienus had subdued Macrianus, who had appeared as his rival in the east, claiming the imperial dignity, the edict came into force throughout the whole Roman world. During this period, when the Christians, as such, had not reason to complain, the Empire was in an unhappy and perilous condition, disastrous invasions by the Persians, Goths, and other foreign tribes being aggravated by famine and pestilence.

Gallienus died before Milan, whither he had been called by civil war, and was succeeded (268 A.D.) by Claudius, who, during his two years' reign, acted toward the Christians in the spirit shown by his predecessor. Aurelian, however, who became prime ruler in 270 A.D., though he left them unmolested during the greater part of his reign, issued an edict, or (for the accounts are conflicting) formed the resolution to issue an edict of persecution; but, whether he actually issued it or not, his murder prevented its execution.

During these years of rest the condition of the Church had become externally more prosperous than at any former period. Large and beautiful churches were built, among which is particularly to be noted one in Nicomedia, the imperial residence. Christians attained to high military posts and to considerable offices at court, where they were treated by the new Emperor, Diocletian (284–305), as children of the house. This growth and development continued during the greater part of his reign—till 303 A.D.

bishops, and congregations against congregations, and some were guilty even of the basest dissimulation and hypocrisy.

Before Diocletian fell back on the exterminating policy of Decius, which he carried out in a spirit still more violent and inhuman than that shown by the earlier Emperor, isolated acts of cruelty had been perpetrated by Maximianus and Galerius. The latter was the chief instigator of the desolating measures which followed. Diocletian was old and rich, the Roman arms had recently been crowned with victory. When Galerius visited his father-in-law at Nicomedia, everything was in favour of his projects. "After the success of the Persian war," says Gibbon, "had raised the hopes and the reputation of Galerius, he passed a winter with Diocletian in the palace of Nicomedia; and the fate of Christianity became the object of their secret consultations. The experienced Emperor was still inclined to pursue measures of lenity; and, though he readily consented to exclude the Christians from holding any employments in the household or the army, he urged in the strongest terms the danger as well as cruelty of shedding the blood of those deluded fanatics. Galerius at length extorted from him the permission of summoning a council, composed of a few persons the most distinguished in the civil and military departments of the State. The important question was agitated in their presence, and those ambitious courtiers easily discerned, that it was incumbent on them to second, by their eloquence, the importunate violence of the Cæsar. . . . The pleasure of the Emperors was at last signified to the Christians, who, during the course of this melancholy winter, had expected, with anxiety, the result of so many secret consultations. The twenty-third of February, which coincided with the Roman festival of the Terminalia, was appointed (whether from accident or design) to set bounds to the progress of Christianity."[1]

At the break of this day, which may have been chosen as most appropriate and auspicious, the prætorians, armed with the necessary instruments, marched up to the principal church of Nicomedia, which occupied a most commanding and beautiful site, and, having burned the holy books which they found there, levelled the building to the ground. Next day followed

[1] [*Decline and Fall*, ch. xvi.]

the first edict of persecution, which was quickly succeeded by other edicts, more stringent and terrible.

1. In the edict of 24th February 303 A.D. the Emperor does not fully manifest his design—if he had formed it—of totally exterminating Christianity. It was to the effect that all assemblies of the Christians for public worship should be forbidden, all their churches should be destroyed, and their holy books burned. Those who held functions of honour and dignity in the State should be degraded if they did not abjure their religion; Christians of humbler condition should be deprived of their rights as citizens and freemen; it should be illegal to liberate Christian slaves as long as they adhered to their faith; further, that Christians of every rank might be subjected to torture.

Scarcely had those against whom this edict was directed recovered from the surprise in which it plunged them—for, notwithstanding their anxious expectation during the winter, they were surprised when the blow was struck—when a second edict appeared which enjoined the incarceration of the clergy. Then, when "the prisons were filled with bishops, presbyters and deacons, readers and exorcists, so that there there was not room for real criminals," came a third edict, commanding that, while all prisoners who abjured should be released, the rest should be compelled to submission by all possible kinds of torture. Finally, in the year 304 A.D., a fourth edict appeared, which was directed against all Christians without distinction, striking not only at the centre, like the one directed against the clergy, but at the circumference—at every point indeed. By this fourth edict, all Christians who refused to sacrifice to the gods were declared to have incurred the penalty of death.

2. Such were the edicts. Notice the extraordinary rapidity with which they succeeded one another. The first was a comparatively mild one, so far, that is, as the persons and lives of the Christians were concerned. And hence the matter has been put thus in favour of Diocletian: that what he originally aimed at was not the extermination of the Christians, which, now that they had become so numerous, would have been an impossibility, but the extermination of the Christian name—the politico-religious extinction of the sect,

and their return to paganism—which, moreover, was to be effected only in strata and by degrees. Force, indeed, he could not but have recourse to, but bloodshed and the infliction of death were not at all in his original intention.

But there has hardly ever been a persecutor of whom the same thing might not be said. The politico-religious extinction of an odious sect—if that can be obtained without barbarous infliction, so much the better. Surely Diocletian was not so ignorant of the past, or of the hold which the new religion had taken in the Empire, as to imagine that his despotic word would work an external conversion in hundreds of thousands in one day. But, if he seriously thought that the complete restoration of the old religion throughout the Empire could be effected without bloodshed, why did he not sooner attempt to gain his end, which was undoubtedly dear to him from the first? Why did he spend a whole winter (302–303 A.D.) in deliberations with Galerius—deliberations in the course of which he is said to have warned the Cæsar of the disastrous consequences that might follow if persecution were resorted to? If he thought the extermination of the Christian name an easy thing, why was it necessary to work upon him by the counsels of the distinguished men whom Galerius assembled, and even by the bowels of beasts, which were likewise consulted, and declared against the followers of the new faith? His reluctant vacillation would be unaccountable if he had not been sensible of the magnitude and danger of the work to which he was urged to set himself. Moreover, the edicts followed one another so quickly that, while the first showed what he may have really felt, and what it was politic to indicate—a desire to accomplish his ends by the mildest measures—the last appears to have been embraced in the original plan, and to have been anticipated by the Emperor as necessary.

But to the execution of the plan there was, further, the stimulus of political suspicion, excited by the conflagration of the imperial palace at Nicomedia, which took place soon after the promulgation of the first edict, and by which a considerable portion of the building was reduced to ashes. The public voice immediately charged the Christians of the court as the incendiaries. They had, it was said, entered into a

plot with the eunuchs against the life of the princes, who, indeed, had narrowly escaped being burned to death. A repetition of the fire took place fourteen days afterwards. It was promptly discovered and extinguished, but it increased the suspicion against the Christians and, above all, infuriated the Emperor. Previously, indeed, the exasperation of the hated sect had been indicated by one of their number, who tore down the edict as soon as it was exhibited in the public place. For this offence the man, who is sometimes spoken of as a courtier, was roasted at a slow fire, a process of torture which he endured not only with fortitude, but with a smile to which Gibbon applies the epithet "insulting." The mystery of the fire, however, though the temper of the Christians might be inferred from this act of daring, remained unexplained. Lactantius supposes that Galerius himself was the author of the conflagration, and laid the guilt upon the Christians with the view of driving Diocletian to extremities. Circumstances, at all events, contrived to produce this result; but, though this was the case, there is abundant reason for believing that from the first he was prepared for the adoption of the most violent measures.

3. It is to be noticed that, while a great number of the Christians perished in the prisons and the mines, many of them suffering unspeakable torture from newly invented and hideous modes of death, so that simple decapitation was sometimes granted merely as an act of grace to persons who had previously deserved well of the State, yet, on the other hand, the magistrates, influenced, it may be, by motives of humanity, and supported and seconded by their subordinates, were frequently content to accept the merest semblance of submission and compliance. The least grain of incense, or, it might be, the simple fact of being present at a sacrifice, though it meant compulsion, was sufficient if no protest was offered. Eusebius relates that sometimes a Christian was forcibly brought up by the officers to the unholy sacrifices and then dismissed as if he had actually satisfied the law; others, who had never approached the altars or touched anything unclean, escaped because it was testified of them by heathen friends that they had obeyed and they themselves did not contradict the calumny; others, again, who lay half-dead on

the ground, were regarded as having prostrated themselves in devotion, or were lifted up and carried away as if they had actually expired. It even happened with some that, when they began to protest with loud voice, the soldiers stopped their mouths and removed them with all speed. This mildness, however, appears to have been shown chiefly towards the beginning of the persecution; and, indeed, it must soon have become apparent that it was failing to accomplish its object. The majority of the Christians would, sooner or later, protest. They could not endure the charge, than which none could be more horrible in their ears, of having publicly broken the first commandment.

Suffice it to say of the cruelties inflicted that they were more varied and exquisite, as well as more numerous, than had been known even at Lyons in the time of Marcus Aurelius. The historian affirms that, when he was in Thebais, he "frequently saw numbers executed at once, some by the sword, and some by fire, so that the weapons were blunted, and the exhausted executioners were obliged to relieve one another."

Everywhere it was a reign of terror for the followers of Christ except in the extreme west—the regions about the Rhine, and Britain, which had been assigned to Constantine Chlorus, the father of Constantine the Great, as the sphere of his activity. Constantine, says Eusebius, "took no part in the war against us." Lactantius, however, says with greater probability that, desiring to avoid the appearance of putting contempt on edicts promulgated for the whole Empire, he had churches pulled down,—walls which could be built up again, —but left uninjured the true temple of God, which is in man.

At the end of 304 A.D. Diocletian returned so far to his original policy, convinced now by experience, as he had previously been by reflection till Galerius wrought upon him, that the execution of the Christians was useless. Only so far, however. Rulers do not usually condemn themselves by a prompt and complete reversal of their policy. Punishments were still inflicted, and, though short of death, they were far from mild; as, for instance, labour in the mines, or the loss of an eye or of a foot.

That famous event, the abdication of Diocletian with Maximianus, took place on the first of May, 305 A.D. It is not improbable that regret, to use no stronger word, for the uselessly shed blood of so many subjects, as well as age and sickness, had its influence in bringing him to his remarkable resolution. The great events which rapidly follow I do not now enter upon; but, according to Blunt, a good churchman, they "demonstrate the utter unsoundness of the sceptical theory, that Christianity owed its establishment to its recognition by the State; the truth manifestly being, that the development of its force was progressive, and that the State did not give it its countenance till it could no longer withhold it."[1]

4. In the persecution under Diocletian we have a thing entirely new; the command to burn the Holy Scriptures. The sacred manuscripts, widely circulated and diligently read, were discerned to be a living spring, from which the rapid growth and prosperity of Christianity proceeded. Far from forbidding or discouraging the reading of the Scriptures, the ancient fathers had recommended and enjoined it. Irenæus, who, we saw, compared the Church, compares also the Bible, with paradise; and "of every tree in this paradise," he says, "ye shall eat." The apologists urged heathen statesmen and philosophers to read it, and some who took it up as enemies were by the perusal converted into friends. Long before the time of Diocletian, it had been recommended that the reading of Scripture should not be restricted to the church, but that morning and evening it should be combined with the sacrifice of prayer and praise. Clement of Alexandria made this proposal, and he would have had the Scriptures read even at meals. Those who could not read were so attentive at public worship that they knew long portions of Scripture by heart. We are told of a blind confessor in the time of this persecution who could repeat to his brethren who were condemned with him to hard labour, long passages from the word of God. Bibles were a kind of property in which many churches had now become rich, and they were placed at the disposal of the

[1] [J. J. Blunt: "*The Church in the Three First Centuries*," p. 328.] Among the martyrs of this period were Anthimus, Bishop of Nicomedia, Pamphilus of Cæsarea, and Petrus of Alexandria.

poor, either to take with them for a time, or to peruse them within the sacred building. The multiplication had been most rapid during the forty years of peace, and it occurred to the persecutors that, if the now widespread tree was to be destroyed, it would be well to strike a blow at the root. Bibles were seized in the churches, as we have seen was the case at Nicomedia, and private persons who had them in their possession were required to deliver them up. Some complied, and they were called *traditores*. Like that of the *libellatici* and *thurificati*, their case afterwards caused dissension in the Church. Those who firmly refused to give up their Bibles suffered martyrdom. Of these the first-mentioned is Felix, Bishop of Thebaris, in proconsular Africa. When commanded to give up the sacred books that, in accordance with the imperial edict, they might be burned, his reply was: "Rather will I let my body be burned." By the governor of the town he was sent in fetters to the proconsul, and, after manifold cruelties, was by him sent to the prefect of Italy, and, on standing firm, was beheaded at Venusia. His last words were: "Six and fifty years have I been a pilgrim in this world. Thou hast kept me undefiled from it. I have kept Thy word." "The pious obstinacy of Felix, an African bishop, appears to have embarrassed the subordinate ministers of the government," and so on, writes Gibbon. He misstates nothing; but surely the rejection of the Bible is no apology for writing in this spirit of one who loved it and died for it. Generations have withered like the grass, but here is a leaf which shall not fade, and it concerns us to know the men who delighted in the abiding word and meditated thereon. The martyrs of the holy books will be remembered till heaven and earth pass away.

CHAPTER XXVI.

TERTULLIAN.

QUINTUS SEPTIMIUS FLORENS TERTULLIANUS, whom I have had occasion to mention repeatedly when relating the history of the persecutions, was born at Carthage about the middle of the second century. The year 160 A.D. is frequently set down as the date of his birth—about three centuries, that is, after the termination of the memorable struggle between Rome and the African city which had ventured to dispute with it the dominion of the world. Carthage had fallen, but tenacity and defiant courage had not died out of the Punic character. They were certainly not wanting in Tertullian; and through him and some others, whose names will readily recur to your memory, the Christian community of proconsular Africa attained a celebrity which was not surpassed in any part of the world.

Tertullian's father, according to the statement of Hieronymus, was a centurion in the service of the proconsul. From various statements in Tertullian's own writings, it has been concluded that his parents were heathens, and that he himself, like Justin Martyr, was educated as a pagan. Although his culture did not take the speculative direction which was characteristic of the school of the other great African city, Alexandria, it is unquestionable that he acquired an extensive knowledge of ancient philosophy as well as of ancient literature. The latter had possibly greater attractions for him. "Still do I remember Homer," he says in one of his works, when giving some reminiscences of his early life and training. From the legal phraseology in which he abounds, as well as from his manner of reasoning, it is usually set down as a thing incontestable, though there is no positive historical evidence in support of it, that he was an advocate. To the

influence of that profession has been traced what may be accounted for from the natural turn of his mind.

Of his early life Tertullian expresses himself in various places in terms of the severest self-condemnation. He had once, he says, belonged to the class of men who were blind and without the light of the Lord; he had been a sinner of the deepest dye; in the mad career of wickedness he had left all behind him. In his *Apology*, when speaking of the resurrection and the judgment of the great day, he adds: "All this we once laughed at like you, for a man becomes a Christian; he is not born one." We learn that in his early life he had witnessed in the amphitheatre the gladiatorial games, for which he afterwards testified his abhorrence so strongly.

Now, when language of the sternest self-reprobation comes from a Tertullian, or a Cyprian, or an Augustine, or a Bunyan, you are entitled to say, as some—Lord Macaulay, for instance—have said, that it is to be understood in a "theological" sense, and that it is unwarrantable to infer that the speaker was much, if at all, worse than the average of his class. At the same time, we are equally entitled to say that the language was true to the actual experience of the men who used it—true to the feelings of profound self-abasement that belong to the new nature of a man who, in the light of God, beholds and honestly and contritely acknowledges a multitude of sins in himself which his charity covers in a neighbour. But whether Tertullian had attained a bad eminence in sin or not, he became another man when he embraced the new religion for which so many had already suffered. Some have imagined that the constancy and fortitude of the martyrs wrought upon him, and were instrumental in leading to his conversion. When we remember his own remarkable declaration, which was made, however, after he became a Montanist, that most men are brought to God by visions, we might make a combination not altogether fanciful, though by no means justifying a confident conclusion, and conjecture that some departed sufferer appeared to him in a dream, as Patamiæna appeared to Basilides. But other motives may easily be supposed; and in truth, the means by which the result is reached are often manifold. Tertullian was characterised not less than Justin by his desire to be stablished and

settled on a firm ground—a desire which at this period inspired in a marked degree, as at any period it has in some degree, reverence for external authority. Now the firm ground which he sought he did not find in the popular pagan religion of that time, which was an object of mockery to many of the heathen themselves. As little did he find it in the systems of the philosophers, which were opposed to one another, and none of which could satisfy him on the points on which he felt certainty was most needed. But again, in keeping with the earnest—some would call it dark and gloomy—character of the man's mind which he showed all through, it is more than probable that one of the motives by which he was immediately acted upon in becoming a Christian was fear. It has been noticed not merely that his references to the judgment are exceedingly numerous as well before as after he became a Montanist, but that in his treatise, *De Testimonio Animæ* (the date of which is uncertain), he singles out the fear of the Divine wrath as very specially the moving force by which men are converted to Christianity. Obviously this is quite compatible with what he says about visions. Though Tertullian goes to an extreme,—indeed it was his nature to go to extremes,—it can scarcely be questioned that, with many of all ages, and with many, it has been alleged, in that particular age, fear has been not only a motive, but a predominating motive, in bringing about conversion.

But may it not be added that with Tertullian himself the *testimonium animæ* had its influence? The intuitions and feelings which he develops in the treatise so called, as proofs for the Divine unity and the doctrine of a future state, had doubtless been his own, and might prepare him for the faith of the Christians in the living God, the Creator of heaven and earth.

We may here notice Tertullian's attitude towards philosophy. As already indicated, it was hostile. In his view, as in that of Irenæus, the Greek philosophers were the fathers of all heresy. "What," he exclaims, "has the academy to do with the Church! What has Plato to do with Christ! What has Athens to do with Jerusalem!" But, though he will not take the beaten paths of the philosophers, but

clears a way for himself through the untrodden forests, it being strongly said of him that he made his own language and made his own logic,—though his thoughts turned away from the philosophers in disdain,—we find him often in the same region, if not on the same road, philosophising in his own way. The man who asserts, and asserts truly, that the Christian is not born, but made, appeals to the *testimonium animæ naturaliter Christianæ* ["the testimony of the soul, by nature Christian"], meaning substantially the same as Clement of Alexandria meant by the λόγος σπερματικός, an expression of which the propriety may be doubtful, but which Tertullian, if he had heard it used, would have condemned without mercy. Both the Alexandrian and the Carthaginian teach that God testifies of Himself in the human soul. Under the vain imaginations and foolish, darkened heart, might be discerned some trace of the Divine knowledge which was not retained. Now and then the benighted soul awakes as out of wild intoxication, and utters itself in appeals to the one God and His everlasting righteousness, bearing witness to something deep and Divine within, which, however, can be brought to full consciousness only through faith in Christ.

The further particulars of Tertullian's life, as given by Jerome, are that "he became a presbyter, and remained orthodox until he reached the term of middle life, when, in consequence of the envy and ill-treatment which he experienced at the hands of the Roman clergy,[1] he went over to the Montanists, and wrote several books in defence of these heretics; he lived to a great age, and was the author of many books."

There is nothing to confirm the explanation which Jerome has given of Tertullian's conversion to Montanism, but there are one or two expressions in Tertullian's writings that favour the statement that he was a presbyter. It is to be noted with regard to these three remarkable men, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Origen, that, while the first held no ecclesiastical office, neither of the other two was ever exalted to the dignity of bishop.

[1] Tertullian visited Rome, remaining there for some time. As appears from his writings he also visited Greece.

1. Tertullian, in his writings against the heretics, appeals to the tradition of the Church as pure and authoritative. We have seen how Irenæus before him insisted on this as the criterion of truth. Even before Irenæus, Hegesippus, who wrote the first Church History, had, in his concern at the many errors which prevailed in his time, and in his zeal for the unity of doctrine, made journeys to a great number of bishops in various parts of the world in order to learn what their faith actually was; and he could testify that, in all the churches which he visited, he found the same faith as he learned from the law and the prophets and from Christ.[1] The facts of his travels and studies were collected in that work, which, as it contained many historical notices, is commonly spoken of as a history, but which appears rather to have been written in an apologetical and polemical interest. In those Memorabilia, at all events, he exalts tradition. Irenæus, then, was not the first, though, before Tertullian, he was the most powerful and conspicuous champion of the doctrine that in matters of controversy appeal must be made in the last instance, and with the infallible certainty of a sound decision, to the authority of the Church, which had preserved in purity the treasure received from Christ and His apostles.

Tertullian uses the sharpest language against those who reject the Catholic doctrine and separate themselves from the Church, comparing them with foul creatures which live in turbid, marshy waters, while he likens the true Christians to fishes which move freely in the pure element, or to the animals of the Ark, safe from the waters of the deluge which swallowed up the ungodly. In his book, *De Præscriptione Hæreticorum*, he denies altogether to heretics the right of arguing from Scripture, as the Church was already in possession, and had long been in possession, of apostolic tradition, and consequently, of the true interpretation of Holy Writ. The *argumentum præscriptionis* then, was simply this, that it was incompetent for the heretics, who were of yesterday, to claim the Divine treasure which had belonged to the

[1] The *History* of Hegesippus consisted of five books of Memorabilia (ὑπομνήματα), of which only fragments, like the account of the death of James the Just, are preserved in Eusebius.

Church from the days of Pentecost. But in setting up the bulwark of tradition against heretical self-will and caprice (speaking from what was undoubtedly his point of view), he does not exalt the bishops as Irenæus did, or as Cyprian afterwards did in Tertullian's own city. What he means by the Catholic doctrine is the voice of the multitude of believers, the voice of the Churches, and not merely of their bishops, particularly of those which were founded by the apostles personally—the mother-Churches—not, however, to the exclusion of the daughters which were united with them in the same faith, that is, the same *regula fidei*, which had now come into use, and was regarded as the sum and quintessence of Holy Scripture. The appeal was thus to the Churches; and it has been remarked that, "while Rome was represented by Tertullian as singularly happy in having enjoyed the instructions and witnessed the martyrdom of Peter and Paul, and in having beheld the tortures inflicted, or attempted to be inflicted, on John the Evangelist, he neither asserted nor implied that she possessed superior privileges or authority."

Without examining this theory, or dwelling on objections which will easily occur, I shall merely remark that an important historical conclusion may be drawn from one of its defects—from what may appear a very obvious defect. It does not provide for a difference between two apostolic Churches. The truth is that the theory is constructed and exhibited in such a way as to exclude the very supposition of such difference. Tertullian bids the heretic, if he would learn the truth, go to any of the Churches; and indeed, if Thessalonica were to err from the faith, might not also Philippi, or Ephesus, or Corinth, or Rome itself? The theory is wrecked by the supposition of any one of them falling away, and hence the inference is inevitable that, two centuries after the birth of Christ, there was substantial unity in the doctrine professed by the congregations scattered throughout the world. It is scarcely necessary to state that, even as a Montanist, Tertullian adhered to his principle so far as doctrine was concerned, though he believed that there was development in the moral territory, and contended that the revelations of the Paraclete were not to be rejected. Nay,

on the other side, he held that a custom was not always to be retained because it was old: "Whatever is wise in opposition to the truth, this will be heresy, even if it be ancient custom."[1] Elsewhere he says boldly: "Christ does not call Himself custom, but the Truth."

2. While Tertullian exalts apostolic tradition, he not less strenuously maintains the authority of Scripture. In the eyes of both Irenæus and the African father, the world lying in wickedness was as a vast temple devoted to Satan and to all manner of demons, and the two Testaments were like the two pillars of the house under whose ruins Samson buried himself and the Philistines. In so far as the Old Testament was not abrogated by the New, they ascribed to it equal authority, and, even where it was, they felt in some degree the tendency, which afterwards proved so pernicious, to transfer the ideas of the Mosaic dispensation to the gospel times. Tertullian held the doctrine of plenary inspiration. The thought of distinguishing between the truth as revealed to the holy men who were inspired, and as reproduced by them and written down for all time, never for a moment occurred to him. All the sacred writers, he taught, must agree, and do agree, in what they make known to man. This is true, not only of doctrine properly so called, but of the cosmological, historical, biographical, and, in short, of the entire contents of the Bible; and though he quoted from the Septuagint version of the Old Testament and from a Latin version of the New, he never hesitated to speak of his citations as the very words of the Holy Spirit. The extraordinary thing is that a man who knew Greek well and, indeed, wrote some of his works in that language, should very rarely have had recourse to the original text when appealing to the writings of the apostles and evangelists. As to the charge brought against Tertullian, as against many others, that he could find in Scripture and prove from it whatever he chose (it was the lyre and he the plectrum), it may be some apology that in these days rigid laws of interpretation were nowhere observed, either among the heretics or among the orthodox; but it is further to be noticed of him that, whether he presses the letter, which he

[1] "Quodcunque adversus veritatem sapit, hoc erit hæresis, etiam vetus consuetudo."

sometimes does most absurdly, or allegorises, which he sometimes does as freely as if he were a Gnostic or an Alexandrian, he has always the most perfect confidence in the truth of his conclusions. He certainly needed himself the restraint of the *regula fidei*, and apostolic tradition. And let it be observed that with him it was a postulate that, as the books of the Bible must agree perfectly with one another, so they must all agree perfectly with the Catholic doctrine, which had been held from the beginning. In dealing with heretics, who so often declared that their views were scriptural, appeal must be made in the last instance to tradition.

3. Tertullian is remarkable for what some have called his realism and others even his materialism. I have spoken of his sometimes pressing the letter of Scripture unduly. This he did with the anthropomorphism of the Bible, for he could not conceive of life without a body. It might be a body most unlike our own,—a shape such as we have never seen,—but he could not conceive of the Supreme God Himself as existing incorporeally. So, as to what we call a disembodied spirit, if one body has been put off, another must have been immediately put on; for in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the former prays for a drop of water to cool his tongue, and the latter reclines on Abraham's bosom. In accordance with this realistic or materialistic tendency, Tertullian was the first to teach Traducianism, according to which, in his view at least,—for it may be presented differently,—sin has been inherited from our progenitors literally by the propagation of sinful flesh. On the other hand, he teaches the sinlessness of the flesh in Him who was conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost.

As to the sacraments, Tertullian nowhere speaks very particularly of the Lord's Supper. I have seen a collection of passages from his writings which tend to show that he regarded the bread and wine as simply figures, emblems of the body and blood. But as to baptism, he speaks of a mysterious union of the Spirit of God with the consecrated water, using language which may not be self-contradictory, but which takes the perilous step from the mystical to the magical, and makes the forgiveness of sins received in the holy ordinance dependent on a newly created virtue in the

material element and on an effect produced first on the body, and then, through the body, on the soul. It is only to be added that, in accordance with the same tendency, Tertullian insists on the doctrine that the very flesh which has sinned must be raised at last to suffer, and the very flesh which has been brought into connection with the sinless flesh of Christ must rise to life everlasting.

4. Tertullian as an apologist surpassed all who preceded him. Though it is not for me to enter on this subject fully, I shall conclude with a few specimens of his style. In his *Apology* he sets himself to show that the fears entertained of the Christians were unfounded, the prejudices against them unreasonable and absurd, the charges against them false and calumnious. "Is it not notorious that, though the Christians are assailed with stones and fire-brands, they never retaliate? And yet it would be easy for them to have their revenge. A few torches would suffice for it in a single night. Numbers are not wanting to them. They are a people of yesterday, no doubt, but they fill cities, islands, castles, municipalities, assemblies, the camp, the companies, palace, senate, forum; in short, every place but the temples. Neither is courage lacking to them, for they are ready to suffer, it is evident, where their religion calls for it; nay, were they but simply to withdraw themselves, such a multitude are they that the very secession would create alarm, not to say that it would deliver the State up to those evil spirits who, finding the house empty, would take possession of it."

The Christians, it is said, are unprofitable citizens. How so, when they are living among others, partakers with them in dress, food, furniture? They do not contribute to the dues of the temples, but they give alms to the poor; distributing more in a single street than falls to the lot of the temples; it is too much to expect them to contribute to mendicant gods also. They pay taxes with a scrupulosity which, as compared with the ordinary practice, more than balances whatever other losses the State sustains by them. At the same time, certain classes there are, no doubt, who may justly complain of the unprofitableness of the Christians—panders, procurers, miscreants of the baths, assassins, sooth-

sayers, poisoners, and the like. Nor is this all. Amongst the numberless culprits that are brought before the magistrates, where is there found a Christian?

Mark the unfairness of mankind! If a philosopher, a Pythagorean, for example, holds the opinion that a man can be made out of a beast, and that animals are to be avoided as food, lest in devouring them we should be eating our ancestors, he makes proselytes; whereas if a Christian maintains that a future body is fashioned out of an antecedent one, Caius out of Caius, the identity preserved, he is pelted with sticks and stones; yet what is incredible in the proposition that, whereas the man who once did not exist exists now, the same, after he has ceased to exist, shall exist again? the second process presenting fewer difficulties than the first, and nature full of analogies to confirm it.

The world cannot extinguish the Christians. The seed of the Christians is their blood. Their very obstinacy, which is objected to them, pleads their cause and propagates their principles. Lookers-on are set to inquire what prompts it; those who inquire pass over to them; those who pass over are eager to suffer with them, that so they may obtain the favour and forgiveness of God through the blood of His Son.

It has been justly said that "the immediate object of the early apologists was not to convert the heathen by presenting a formal body of evidence, but to show that the Christians were entitled to live and to eat their bread in peace." Tertullian does not exclude ulterior aims, but, as to the immediate one, it is saying little to affirm that his arguments are unanswerable.

I have dwelt on some peculiarities that may leave an unfavourable impression of Tertullian; but the acute, fiery, fearless African, frequently harsh and abrupt, frequently also eloquent and persuasive, and sometimes even graceful, was the greatest Christian writer that had appeared since the apostles fell asleep. He is the father of Latin theology. Cyprian would not allow a day to pass without reading from him, and often he exclaimed to his attendants, *Da Magistrum* ["Give me the Master"].[1]

[1] But Cyprian never names or quotes Tertullian.

CHAPTER XXVII.

CYPRIAN.

Of the three great fathers of the North African Church whose names have given it celebrity and whose writings have influenced succeeding ages, Thascius Cæcilius Cyprianus is the second in order of time, and, if by no means the greatest, occupies an illustrious position in the eyes of the Christian world generally, and eventually receives peculiar tributes of honour from those to whom his doctrine of episcopal succession and episcopal dignity specially commends him. The life of the three great men has much in common. Of ardent nature, they, as they testify of themselves, follow in the first period of their life the impulses of their own corrupt hearts, and engage eagerly in the pursuit of worldly glory and pleasure; in the period of their manhood they are suddenly touched by the transforming grace of God, and thenceforth they give themselves wholly to the service of Christ and His Church according to the measure of their gifts and knowledge.

I have given Cyprian's full name. When the sentence of death was passed upon him, he was called simply Thascius Cyprianus: *Thascium Cyprianum gladio animadverti placet* ["It is decreed that Thascius Cyprianus be put to death by the sword"]. In the edict of proscription, which was published against him at the time of his flight, and by which his goods were confiscated, he is called Cæcilius Cyprianus: *Siquis tenet vel possidet de bonis Cæcilii Cypriani* ["If any one holds or has in possession any of the goods of Caec. Cyprianus"]. He was called Cæcilius for a reason that will immediately be stated. As for the name Cyprianus, his enemies, of whom he had many in his day, sometimes changed the first vowel and pronounced Coprianus (κόπρος,

"dung"), choosing in this miserable way to give expression to their detestation.

Cyprian was the son of an eminent heathen, a Carthaginian senator, as is commonly accepted—at all events, of a man of high position and wealth. He himself chose what seems to have been then the usual path to distinction. He became an advocate, and also, the two things being frequently associated, a teacher of rhetoric in his native city. Some writers are still disposed to trace his conversion to the influence of a Christian virgin, whom an eastern legend introduces into his history—at least, into the history of a bishop called Cyprian. In Photius, it appears, there is found an account of a lost poem by the Empress Eudocia, who celebrated in three books the life of a bishop of that name. In the first book, she relates how a young man, named Agladius, sought and obtained the magic aid of Cyprian to win the love of a Christian virgin, Justina, who naturally abhorred him as being a heathen. But the virgin was able, by making the sign of the cross, to repel the assaults of all the demons that the magician Cyprian had evoked against her, so that the chief of those wicked spirits was obliged at last to confess the utter impotence to which that sign had reduced him. This confession, which was made to Cyprian, and, at the same time, the firmness of the virgin, produced such a powerful impression upon him that he burned his magic books and became a Christian. He was received, though not without difficulty,—for he was naturally distrusted on account of his previous way of life,—into the number of the catechumens, was in due time baptized, and speedily was put in office, his first post being that of an *ostiarius*, or door-keeper, from which he rose after no long period to the highest in the Church. The second book contains Cyprian's confession. In the third is related his martyrdom, with that of Justina, many of the circumstances bearing a striking resemblance to those which took place at the end of the real Cyprian.

Rettberg, to whom Kurtz refers in his short notice of Cyprian, holds that, as there is no historical proof that an oriental bishop of the name of Cyprian ever existed, the story is to be explained simply in this way, that the fame of

the learned and pious Bishop of Carthage resounded also in the east, and all the more that he had made common cause with Firmilianus, the Bishop of Cæsarea, against the pretensions of Rome. An interest was felt in the man, till at last even a princess conceived the idea of presenting his life in a poem, and of course she wrote with poetic licence and embellishment. The name and office and martyrdom, and many particulars in the life, are retained, but the previous heathenish way of life, of which little was known, but which was manifestly a walk with the devil, might be exhibited as pleased the fancy of the writer; and so we have sorcery and demons on the one hand, and the instrumentality of a pure virgin on the other. The chief difficulty—the removal of the scene to the east—is met in like manner. It was designed for effect. Eastern readers would thus be more deeply interested in the poem.[1]

Whatever may be thought of the oriental Cyprian,—whether he be regarded as a real person or not,—the charge of sorcery against the African bishop is incredible. He was sufficiently frank in his confessions; he was not disposed to cloak his sins; and certainly, if he had been a sorcerer, he would not have failed to magnify, by stating the fact, the grace shown in his deliverance. According to the account of Jerome, the instrument of Cyprian's conversion was not a virgin, but the presbyter Cæcilius, whose name the convert took to himself, a new name often being taken at the new birth. Cæcilius dying soon afterwards, left his widow and children under the guardianship of Cyprian. The year of Cyprian's baptism could not be long before or long after 246 A.D.; probably this is its date. As to the date of his birth, all that can be said is that it was about the beginning of the century.

The blessedness of the new life on which he had entered Cyprian describes in a letter, to which I have seen the epithet "glorious" applied. It was written to a certain Donatus, who had been baptized along with him.

"The subject itself," says he to his friend, "on which I am about to speak will assist me. In courts of justice, in the public assembly, in political debate, a copious eloquence may be the glory of a voluble ambition; but, in speaking of the

[1] [*Cyprianus nach seinem Leben und Wirken.*—S. 28.]

Lord God, a chaste simplicity of expression strives for the conviction of faith rather with the substance than with the powers of eloquence. Accept what is felt before it is spoken—what has not been accumulated with tardy painstaking during the lapse of years, but has been inhaled in one breath of ripening grace.

"While I was still lying in darkness and gloomy night, wavering hither and thither, tossed about on the foam of this boastful age, knowing nothing of my real life, and remote from truth and light, I used to regard it as a difficult matter, and especially as difficult in respect of my character at that time, that a man should be capable of being born again,—a truth which Divine mercy had announced for my salvation,—and that a man, quickened to a new life in the laver of saving water, should be able to put off what he had previously been; and although retaining all his bodily structure, should be himself changed in heart and soul. But you yourself assuredly know and recollect as well as I do what was taken away from us, and what was given to us, by that death of evil and life of virtue.

"For a brief space conceive yourself to be transported to one of the loftiest peaks of some inaccessible mountain; thence gaze on the appearance of things lying below you, and, with eyes turned in various directions, look upon the eddies of the billowy world, while you yourself are removed from earthly contacts—you will at once begin to feel compassion for the world, and, with self-recollection and increasing gratitude to God, you will rejoice with all the greater joy that you have escaped. Consider the roads blocked up by robbers, the seas beset with pirates, wars scattered all over the earth, with the bloody horror of camps. The whole world is wet with mutual blood; murder (which in the case of an individual is admitted to be a crime) is called a virtue when it is committed wholesale. And now, if you turn your eyes to the cities themselves, you will behold a concourse more fraught with sadness than any solitude. The gladiatorial games are prepared that blood may gladden the lust of cruel eyes. The body is fed up with strongest food, and the vigorous mass of limbs is enriched with brawn and muscle, that the wretch, fattened for punishment, may die a harder death. Man is

slaughtered that man may be gratified, and crime is not only committed, but taught. Fathers look on their own sons; a brother is in the arena and his sister is hard by; and although a grander display of pomp increases the price of the exhibition, yet, oh shame! even the mother will pay the increase that she may be present at her own miseries. Look at the theatres. The old horrors of parricide and incest are unfolded in action calculated to express the image of the truth, so that, as the ages pass by, any crime that was formerly committed may not be forgotten. Crimes never die out by the lapse of ages; wickedness is never abolished by process of time; impiety is never buried in oblivion. They picture Venus immodest, Mars adulterous, and that Jupiter of theirs, not more supreme in dominion than in vice, inflamed with earthly love in the midst of his own thunders. . . . Men imitate the gods whom they adore, and to such miserable beings their crimes become their religion."

What is seen in the forum and among the affluent and powerful is no better, but all the more glorious is it when the soul from that lofty watch-tower looks upward to God and heaven, rises higher than the sun, far transcends all this earthly power, and, as he expresses it, "begins to be that which it believes itself to be."

Immediately after his conversion, Cyprian gave a proof of his Christian love by setting apart the greater part of his fortune, which appears to have been considerable, that distribution might be made among the poor. The Church of Carthage promptly recognised the value and importance of the accession that had been made to their members. In the year that followed his baptism Cyprian was made a presbyter, and, after the lapse of another year, he was constrained by the people, whose impetuous love and urgent prayers he found it impossible so resist, to accept the office of bishop, which was then vacant. It would seem that the *nolo episcopari* had only deepened the conviction of his worthiness, and that the people had surrounded his house and stormed him with their entreaties, refusing to depart till he declared himself ready to accept their call.

It was their call; and it is important to hear what Cyprian himself, who is so great an authority on the power of the

bishop, has to say on this point. He says expressly, in a very important letter:[1] "The people have themselves the power either of choosing worthy priests or of rejecting unworthy ones. Which very thing, too, we observe to come from Divine authority, that the priest should be chosen in the presence of the people under the eyes of all." This he attempts to prove even from Numbers xx. 25–28, where we read of the priestly robes being taken from Aaron and put upon Eleazar, his son, in presence of all the assembly. Then he proceeds: "And this is subsequently observed, according to Divine instruction, in the Acts of the Apostles, when Peter speaks to the people of ordaining an apostle in the place of Judas. 'Peter,' it says, 'stood up in the midst of the disciples, and the multitude were in one place.'" Then the election of deacons, as recorded in Acts vi., is adduced. The thing was done diligently and carefully, he says, with the calling together of the whole of the people; surely for this reason, that no unworthy person might creep into the ministry of the altar. Then he says further: "You must diligently observe and keep the practice delivered from divine tradition and apostolic observance, which is also maintained among us, and almost throughout all the provinces: that for the proper celebrations of ordinations all the neighbouring bishops of the same province should assemble with that people for which a prelate is ordained, and the bishop should be chosen in the presence of the people, who have most fully known the life of each one, and have looked into the doings of each one as respects his habitual conduct. And this also, we see, was done by you in the ordination of our colleague Sabinus, so that by the suffrage of the whole brotherhood, and by the sentence of the bishops who had assembled in their presence, and who had written letters to you concerning him, the episcopate was conferred upon him, and hands were imposed on him, in the place of Basilides."[2]

The Church, let me remind you, had rapidly increased since the days of Alexander Severus. There had been no

[1] No. 67, Oxford edit., in a note.

[2] Basilides, and Martial, another Spanish bishop, had lapsed by taking "certificates of idolatry," as the *libelli* are called in the "argument" of this letter.

violent or general persecution for thirty years, and the Christians, who had rest, grew throughout the world. At Carthage, at the time of Cyprian's elevation to the bishopric (248 A.D.), there were twenty thousand who professed the faith, and in that multitude all classes of the community were represented. The increase in the neighbouring countries, Numidia and Mauritania, must have been proportionally great, for at a synod which was convoked at Carthage a few years later, there were no fewer than eighty-seven bishops present.

But, with this rapid external growth, supineness and worldliness in every form had crept in, and, according to the testimony of Cyprian himself, these had prevailed so widely, and exerted so deadening an influence, that a new persecution was anticipated by him as a merited and merciful chastisement. The moral declension in Carthage was so great, the luxury and licentiousness were so general, that Hagenbach compares Cyprian's position with that which was sustained by Calvin in Geneva about thirteen centuries later. Before the persecution broke out, Cyprian felt himself called upon to use the authority with which he believed himself to be armed from above for the restoration and maintenance of the Church's purity. In the eyes of a Montanist or of a Novatian, indeed, he could not but seem to come short of his duty; but, judging him by a reasonable and scriptural standard, we may say he was a strict disciplinarian. A man might even desire to be so-called who did not go so far as he in denouncing and positively forbidding all magnificence in dress, by which, according to him, woman disfigured the work of the Creator, or attendance at the public spectacles, and the imparting lessons in declamation to those who had thoughts of appearing in the *cothurnus* or the *soccus*.

But, while he was thus seeking to maintain discipline in the Church, the purifying fire of 250 A.D. began to rage. The extraordinary cruelty of Decius was too often seconded by the fury of the pagan populace, and in Carthage the old cry of *Ad leones!* was raised against the bishop. He found opportunity, however, to flee from the city, and, availing himself of it, he took refuge in a secure hiding-place, which was known to his friends, and from which he wrote letters more precious, in the eyes of some, than any that

were ever written from a place of banishment or a prison, except, of course, those which were written about two hundred years before from Rome, and which have done so much for the furtherance of the gospel.

It is sometimes said that Cyprian's flight was atoned for by the martyrdom which he courageously endured eight years afterwards. But it is certain that, whether in any case it could be said to be atoned for by himself or not, it was never repented of. He did not share the conviction of Tertullian, whom he was wont to call *magister*, except, as appears from many points of difference, in a very qualified sense—the conviction that flight was in every case a sin. That in some cases the stain of cowardice would justly attach to the man who fled may be admitted, and cannot well be disputed. If the head of a Christian community leaves it exactly at the time when it needs his support and guidance, or, it may be added, his example in suffering, it is impossible to vindicate his departure, though his life should be in jeopardy every moment he remains. But before making an application of Christ's words about the hireling and the wolf, which, in the case just supposed, might be quoted with the greatest justice, it is but fair to remember that the Christian pastor himself is a member of the flock under the Great Shepherd, and — what is of importance here — sometimes the member of the flock whom the wolf seeks above all others. That was the case in the Decian persecution. Though the edict was general, the bishops, it was natural, were first sought out; and in point of fact, though others suffered unto death, the number of bishops from whom the last penalty was exacted was proportionally very great. On the other hand, people—and we cannot wonder at it—would consider not only the circumstances, but the man. What is justified in one is not easily pardoned in another. Clement of Alexandria, for example, who, though not a bishop, held, as teacher, a most prominent position in the Church, had fled to Palestine in consequence of the persecution under Severus (202–220 A.D.), but his reputation does not appear to have suffered in the estimation of his contemporaries or of later generations. Here was a man who had been watched with jealous eyes since the day he entered on

office. Within two years from his baptism he had been elevated over the heads of experienced presbyters, some of whom afterwards caused him trouble, and whose dissatisfaction, it is possible, was not unknown to him when he said *Nolo episcopari*, and could not be induced to accept office except by the loud and enthusiastic voices of the people. Above all, as we have seen, he had not spared the growing slackness and wickedness of the time; and when he, who had been strict with others, appeared himself to desert the post of duty, it is not astonishing that many condemned him at the time and that he has often been condemned since.

Writing to the presbyters and deacons assembled at Rome, Cyprian himself says:—

"As the Lord's commands teach, immediately the first burst of the disturbance arose, the people with violent clamour immediately demanded me. I, taking into consideration, not so much my own safety as the public peace of the brethren, withdrew for a while, lest, by my overbold presence, the tumult which had begun might be still further provoked. Nevertheless, though absent in body, I was not wanting either in spirit, or in act, or in my advice, so as to fail in any benefit that I could afford my brethren by my counsel, according to the Lord's precepts, in anything that my poor abilities enabled me."

During Cyprian's absence, which lasted fourteen months, the community felt that they had still a bishop who bore them on his heart; who showed the same Christian love for the poor as he had shown when he became a convert; who exhorted the persecuted to remain faithful; and who had a word also for those who obtruded themselves for martyrdom. "The Lord demands, not our blood, but our faith." Moreover—and nothing establishes more clearly his full consciousness of innocence—he adheres in the main to the strict principles he had formerly observed, and insists on the presbyters carrying them out in the government of the Church.

When, in the year 251 A.D., on the death of Decius, Cyprian returned to Carthage, he was well aware that there awaited him within the Church struggles which threatened to become more formidable than the enmity of the world.

The first great conflict in which he engaged, and which, indeed, he had been carrying on when in his retreat, concerned the fallen. Gloriously as the Church, through the number of her martyrs, had come forth from her terrible trial, she had sustained deep wounds through the unfaithfulness of not a few of her members, who had been brought to recant, some of them overcome by actual torture, some alarmed by mere threats, others, it is sad to learn, not even personally threatened, hastening to the altars of the gods on the simple publication of the imperial edict. They were all comprehended under the name of the "lapsed" (*lapsi*), and they were all excluded—they had all, indeed, unless we are disposed to except the *libellatici*, excluded themselves—from the membership of the Church. But, when the time of trial was past, there arose with most the desire to be restored; and, to gain this end, many of them sought the intercession of the martyrs and confessors. And when those who had endured imprisonment, and bonds, and hunger, and the rack—when they, the strong, were heard pleading for the weak brethren, it required some courage to resist them. But the Bishop, who was stigmatised as a fugitive, had that courage. He did indeed attach some value to their intercession; but that a right should be found, and an impetuous demand made, that every lapsed person, without respect to the circumstances of the case and to the judgment of the bishop, should be entitled to restoration, and to immediate restoration, if only he could produce a martyr's recommendation,—a *libellus pacis*, as it was called,—this was altogether incompatible with Cyprian's view of his own office, and with the demand which he, on his side, felt entitled, and was entitled, to make, that the applicant should give clear evidence of godly sorrow and should do public penance. How necessary it was to make a firm stand will appear from a single statement. Sometimes a *libellus pacis* was given in favour not merely of the holder, but also of persons not named, and an indefinite number of them, being drawn out with the words: *Communicet ille cum suis* ["Let him, along with his people, communicate"], which was made to cover, not only near kinsmen, but any whom the holder chose to reckon among his friends.

This abuse was opposed by Cyprian, but the Carthaginian

clergy—those of them, at least, who had been dissatisfied with the bishop from the time of his election, among whom Novatus and the deacon Felicissimus were conspicuous—made common cause with the fallen, or, if you will, with those who recommended them. They were excommunicated on the return of Cyprian in 251 A.D., and chose Fortunatus as their bishop, but they did not long maintain a separate existence.

About the same time, a similar controversy was carried on at Rome; and some have noticed that even the stricter party at Rome, like the stricter party at Carthage, did not go so far as to cut off from the hope of salvation those to whom they refused restoration to the Church. The principle of both these parties was that the lapsed should be exhorted to repentance and recommended to the Divine mercy. There is no evidence, at least, that they held any other doctrine: there is, if anything, evidence to the contrary. This, however, they certainly held: that a Church that received again into its bosom those who had fallen into the mortal sin of idolatry, lost the character and rights of the true Church, inasmuch as purity was one of its essential marks.

Adhering to this principle, the party formed at Rome, when it became a separate sect, baptized anew the Catholics who came over to them. In the writings which they addressed to the Churches of Greece, they called themselves "the pure" (*οἱ καθαροί*), and their clergy (though the exact time when the custom was introduced cannot be determined) wore white garments as the symbol of holiness.

At the head of this party stood the Roman presbyter Novatianus. He is not to be confounded with the Carthaginian presbyter, Novatus, who had come to Rome, leaving the deacon Felicissimus and the other schismatics to struggle as best they could, and who is described as a restless spirit, to whom it was of little consequence what doctrines he embraced provided he could raise disturbance and assert his own importance. Accordingly, though at Carthage he had been the champion of the laxer views, he stood forth at Rome as the defender of ascetical, Montanistic principles. Against Cornelius, Bishop of Rome, was brought, not only the accusation that he received the lapsed back again into the Church,

but the further and worse change that he himself was a *libellaticus*. Although Novatus was the soul of the party that urged these charges, Novatianus, who enjoyed a good reputation, and possessed a certain influence and authority as a Roman presbyter, was elevated to the bishopric by his partisans and obtained recognition from a number who already held that office. But Cyprian, although he had held rigid principles with regard to the lapsed, vehemently opposed the supporters of Novatianus, and became the most zealous advocate of Cornelius. To this course he was impelled not only by his abhorrence of schism, but because, though indignant at the abuse of the *libelli pacis*, he was not disposed to go the extreme length of the Novatians. He declared himself against the absolute exclusion of the lapsed from the Church. He was not opposed to their restoration, if they gave evidence of true sorrow and did penance. On this occasion he asserted most strongly his doctrine of the unity of the visible Church—a unity which must be maintained though the tares were mingled with the wheat. Notwithstanding the opposition of Cyprian and of others, the Novatians maintained themselves for a considerable period in different parts of the Empire. In Phrygia they united themselves, as was natural enough, with the remains of the Montanists.

The unity of the Church: that was a fundamental thought with Cyprian. The very name which Christians gave one another—brethren—involved it. They belonged to one family. As Christ was one, as the Holy Spirit was one, so the Church was one. Manifold types of this unity are to be seen in the Scriptures: in paradise, with its many trees, watered by four rivers, that is, the four Gospels; in the ark of Noah, without which was no salvation; in the house of Rahab, which her kindred must in no wise leave; and also in the paschal lamb, inasmuch as the law required that it should be consumed in one house; and, it is needless to add, in the undivided, seamless coat of Christ.[1] True, the Church is widespread; but, while there are many rays, there is but one sun; many branches, there is one stem; many streams, there is one fountain. All these figures are applied without hesitation to the visible Catholic Church. Love in the spirit he does not

[1] "Extra ecclesiam nulla salus."

conceive as possible without adherence to the external organisation. Let a man separate himself from it, no matter for what reason, he is a traitor; he has trodden down the holiest jewel under his feet; he has broken the second of the two commandments on which hang all the law and the prophets.

Starting from this principle, Cyprian not only condemned the Novatians and all other schismatics, but with great decision and earnestness combated, in opposition to Stephanus, Bishop of Rome, the validity of baptism by heretics. To him, the Bishop of Carthage, it seemed a self-evident proposition that baptism administered by those who had separated themselves from the Church ought not to be recognised as valid. Stephanus, on the other hand, could appeal in support of his more indulgent view and procedure to the custom which had prevailed in Rome. But Cyprian could not see how the practice at Rome imposed any imperative obligation on Christian communities in other lands; and, moreover, he could not see why it should be maintained at Rome if it was contrary to sound principles. A custom which does not rest on a scriptural or rational foundation was, he held, but an antiquated error.

And here it may be noticed in passing that Cyprian nowhere attaches the same importance to tradition as Irenæus or Tertullian. Possibly he was himself as much influenced by it as either, but the authority on which he is wont to insist is that of Holy Scripture.

But the view of Stephanus was defended on other grounds than that of Roman custom. Baptism, it was contended, is a valid act in itself, altogether independently of the faith of the man who administers it. The rite is not void when performed by an unbeliever or a heretic if only it be performed, according to the command, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. As a seal has validity whatever be the character of him who impresses it, so the ordinance of baptism is not vitiated by the wickedness or heterodoxy of him who dispenses it. Stephanus, however, did not receive heretics back into the Catholic communion altogether without ceremony, but he thought that the imposition of hands was sufficient.

Cyprian, having sent ambassadors to Rome to convince the

Bishop there of his error, but without effect, turned to the bishops of Asia and gained their support. The Bishop of Cæsarea, Firmilianus, held the same view, and denounced the arrogance of Rome in seeking to force on other churches its custom as the only valid one. He called Stephanus the true schismatic, and said that he was worse than all heretics, inasmuch as heretics, when they returned to the Church, were refused by him the forgiveness of their sin in being refused baptism. Dionysius of Alexandria held similar views. Several African synods pronounced in accordance with them, but ultimately, as in the Easter controversy, Rome gained the victory.

In connection with the fundamental thought of the unity of the Church, we must regard Cyprian's idea of the Episcopate. The Church, he says, is the people united with the priest, the flock adhering to their shepherd. The bishop is in the Church, and the Church is in the bishop, and if a man is not with the bishop, he is not in the Church.

But not only is the bishop the visible head of the community. He is the special organ of the Holy Spirit. While, according to the Protestant conviction, the Holy Spirit belongs to no order in the Church in a more immediate or original manner than to the rest of its members; according to Cyprian, it is the bishops, whom he calls priests, by whom uninterrupted connection is maintained with the Lord, and through whom spiritual blessings reach the flock. The water, he says, must be previously purified and hallowed by the priest, that, when sprinkled in baptism (he held sprinkling sufficient), it may wash away the sins of the man who undergoes the rite. "Through our prayer and the imposition of our hands, they who are baptized receive the Holy Spirit and are perfected by the seal of the Lord."

On the other hand—and here Cyprian differs widely from the Roman Catholic view—he asks: "How can he purify and hallow the water, who is himself unclean, and with whom the Holy Spirit is not?" That he does not mean by this language mere official holiness, is evident from what he says in another epistle: "We must choose only spotless and unreprovable bishops, who, bringing offerings to God in a worthy and holy manner, can be heard in the prayers which they

present for the weal of the people, for it is written, 'God heareth not sinners, but if any man doeth His will, him He heareth.'" Again, "Priests must be chosen with caution, and after full inquiry, that we may have the assurance God will accept their petitions." What qualifies the bishop, then, for mediating between God and the people, and for communicating the Spirit, is neither his office by itself, nor his personal worthiness by itself, but both together. But to make the virtue of ordinances and the communication of the Spirit dependent on the subjective state of a priest—of course *we* hold that the subjective state of the ministers may have great moral influence—is as untenable as the Roman Catholic view, and could scarcely have been tolerable to the soul of Cyprian unless he had been prepared, as we have seen he was, to make the priest so far dependent on the people. To them he conceded the right of disowning and removing an unworthy bishop and electing a worthy one in his place.[1]

Still proceeding from the fundamental thought of the unity of the Church, he sees it represented in one see (*καθέδρα*). The pre-eminence which was assigned to Peter in the famous promise belongs to his successor, who is no other than the Bishop of Rome. Accordingly, he speaks of the Roman community as the *radix et matrix ecclesiæ catholicæ* ["the root and womb of the Catholic Church"], which must be recognised by all, and to which all must adhere. The desire to continue in fellowship with that Church and its bishop disposed him to enter into frequent correspondence with them, and, at times, to follow the counsels that came from them. But, as appears from ample evidence, he acted in the full consciousness of his freedom, receiving the opinion of the Roman bishop as an advice, and not as a command. The usurpation of authority over him met with the most decided opposition, and the kind of pre-eminence which he conceded to Rome was quite compatible with the doctrine of his individual independence and his responsibility, not to a fellow-bishop, but to the Lord. This appeared principally in the above-mentioned dispute with Stephanus concerning the baptism administered by heretics.

[1] A right exercised in the case of the two Spanish bishops Basilides and Martial.

streets; then Cyprian assembled his flock and exhorted them for Christ's sake to show mercy and humanity to the heathen, and to recompense evil with good. Why were they Christians at all—what were they better than heathens—if they did not? Upon the exhortation of their Bishop, they acted as became the children of Him who makes His sun to shine upon the unthankful and the evil as well as on the good. By the hearty surrender of their property, as well as by active personal service, they did much to relieve the suffering, and to stay the ravages of the plague. Such exhibitions of the true Christian spirit could not but win general esteem, and hence, when the time of Cyprian's martyrdom came, he was treated with a certain consideration and civility on which Gibbon lays particular stress, almost as if they atoned for his execution.

Valerian, let me recall to you, had at first been friendly to the Christians. "His whole court," says an exaggerating letter preserved in Eusebius, "was full of God-fearing men, and was a Church of God." But after a few years, under the influence of Macrianus, the magician, he issued an edict which was directed against Christian assemblies and against the bishops, but not enacting the last penalty. This was in the year 257 A.D., and in August of the same year the proconsul Aspasius Paternus summoned Cyprian into his presence, and disclosed to him the Emperor's will that every one, without exception, should take part in the worship of the State. "What have you to answer to that?" "I am a Christian and a bishop," Cyprian replied; "I know no other God than the Creator of heaven and earth. Him do we Christians serve. To Him do we pray for all men, and for the Emperor himself." Adhering to his confession, he was banished to Curbe (Kurubis), which was situated about a day's journey from Carthage.

The deacon Pontius, who wrote his life, accompanied him, and he was consoled by the frequent visits of the brethren as well as by the love of the inhabitants of the place. Being comforted himself, he wrote a letter of consolation to Christians whose situation was harder than his own, some of them being in prison, and a greater number pining in the mines, scantily fed, filthily clad, driven to work with blows,

wearing fetters, and having the hard ground for their beds. Cyprian seeks to console them in a variety of ways. Of one of these ways no mention is made in his circular letter, but it is mentioned in the replies which came from different quarters: he sent a contribution in money, by which the sufferings of the poor Numidian martyrs were considerably mitigated.

Not quite a year had elapsed when Galerius Maximus, the successor of Aspasius Paternus, who had died suddenly, recalled the Bishop, wishing to have him at hand, as a more severe edict was expected. Several distinguished men, according to Pontius, urged him to flee, and offered him a secure hiding-place. But, as in the time of the Decian persecution he had been warned by God in a dream to depart from Carthage, it had, on the other hand, immediately after his arrival at Kurbe, been indicated to him in a similar manner that his martyrdom was at hand. Along with the news of the imperial edict he received information of the martyrdom of Sixtus, Bishop of Rome, who had been executed in a churchyard, probably because the Christians had frequently assembled there in defiance of the prohibition of the government.

The proconsul was now at Utica. The bishop did betake himself to a place of concealment for a little time, wishing to die, not at Utica, but in the city where he had laboured. Accordingly, as soon as the proconsul returned to Carthage, Cyprian returned to his gardens. On the 13th September, the proconsul sent two of his people, who brought Cyprian in a carriage and delivered him up for trial the same day. The trial was postponed, however, till the day following, and meanwhile the prisoner was committed to the custody of an officer, in whose house he spent the night, and by whom he was treated with respect. A multitude, consisting of heathens as well as Christians, assembled round the house and remained all night, testifying their love and admiration. But the Emperor's command, the proconsul felt, must be obeyed, and, on the morning of the 14th September, Cyprian was brought into the prætorium, having, on the way to it, been surrounded with the people as with a wall. The proconsul urged him to consider well his position, and to offer sacrifice according to

the Emperor's command. Cyprian's reply was that no consideration was needed: he could not desert so righteous a cause. Sentence was pronounced: *Thascium Cyprianum gladio animadverti placet*, and it was executed without delay. "God be thanked," Cyprian had said on receiving it. When led forth to suffer, he gave orders that the executioner should receive twenty-five pieces of gold. If the man deserved these pieces, it was certainly not because he had any heart for his work. He is described as reluctant and trembling, and Cyprian, who had kneeled down and prayed, and whose eyes had been bound by a presbyter and subdeacon, urged him to do his office. It was exactly a year, says Pontius, from the night of the vision announcing the martyrdom.

Cyprian was the first Carthaginian bishop that won the martyr's crown. Here, in the eyes of Gibbon, is a proof that, after all, a Christian bishop exposed himself to little danger compared with a Roman Emperor. Although it is not necessary to meet such a statement by showing that in some places bishops were at that time exposed to very great danger, it may be mentioned that, since 250 A.D., certainly three bishops of Rome, and probably five,[1] had bled for their confession.

On the spot where Cyprian was executed was afterwards erected a house of God, in which Augustine often preached, awakening the sense of a higher and more blessed unity than can be realised by the Church visible, empirical and imperfect —a holy unity, which binds us now not only with the sainted Cyprian, but with one whom the Church has not canonised, and could not canonise—the Montanist Tertullian. The "master" moved in a wider circle of thought, had greater originality and freshness and power—a sort of Janus head, some one has said, who not only represented the past, but indicated in large measure paths for the future; but Cyprian was more the man of his time—the great ecclesiastic, the champion of his order—and hence he has won a certain admiration greater than that accorded to Tertullian. No churches contend about the Montanist's bones: not a few contend about the bones of Cyprian. The bishop had

[1] Fabian, Lucius, Sixtus II., and probably Cornelius and Stephanus.

strengthened himself in his position, not only by firmness and activity and effective speech, but by noble beneficence and devotion. He had a true largeness of heart, which is sometimes found in combination with what we consider narrow ecclesiasticism. We honour him as one who has gone where martyrs gain the mightiest renown.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA.

In the Christian Gnosis—the true Gnosis in contradistinction to the false—it soon came to be recognised as a fundamental principle that its design is not to supply by scientific discovery gaps in the doctrine received by tradition (in the widest sense) from Christ and His apostles, but, on the contrary, accepting this as the foundation to which nothing could be added, and from which nothing could be taken away, to exhibit its contents in their connections and relations, to show that they were in harmony with one another and with reason, and could be recommended on rational grounds.

Again, it came to be recognised at least by many that the certainty of the doctrines of salvation gained by scientific inquiry was not greater or higher than the immediate certainty which is involved in a true and living faith, for which, indeed, many who had never tried to speculate had willingly submitted to torture and death. Origen, himself the most speculative of the fathers, teaches expressly that this greatest of blessings certainly does not depend on philosophical investigations, for which the multitude have neither qualification nor opportunity. The Christian Gnostic, to take the language of that time, or the Christian philosopher, is distinguished from the simple believer, not by the larger possession of positive Christian truth, but by the form which that which is common to both receives. The substance of that which is behind is the same. The former—the man that has the "Gnosis"—knows that substance as necessary: the latter knows it as real. "The Gnosis," says Clement, "is the strong and firm manifestation of the things received by faith."[1] That the Gnosis must be based and

[1] Ἡ γνῶσις ἀπόδειξις τῶν διὰ πίστεως παρειλημμένων ἰσχυρὰ καὶ βέβαιος. Compare Is. vii. 9: "If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established;" where "believe" is taken by some to mean "understand."

built on the common faith was justified by the remark of the same writer, that, the Divinity of Christ being once accepted, it would be contrary to reason to make the acceptance of the truths which He has revealed dependent on a scientific demonstration. The Gnosis, thus apprehended as that to which faith advances without increasing or losing its essential contents, has been described as walls and bulwarks and as a glorious structure in which man has been a co-worker with God, and which fills its possessor with unspeakable joy and heavenly consolation.

Such figures and language, however, come from the east. It is not thus that Irenæus and Tertullian speak. True, they are far from denying that Christianity is the highest reason, and they set themselves—the latter especially sets himself—to establish and exhibit it as the only rational religion; but they do not so much turn themselves to the theoretical, speculative side of Christianity as to the practical bearings of their religion as historically delivered. Their grand object was to formulate and fix the things that had been most surely believed, while the eastern theologians, though they did not overlook this end, treated it as a subordinate one, and made it their grand object to teach a Christian, in opposition to a heretical, gnosis.

The great world-city Alexandria had long been famous as mediating between east and west, not only in trade and commerce, but in learning and culture. The sovereigns of Rome, particularly Hadrian and the Antonines, accounted it an honour to preserve and extend the reputation which the city had won under the Ptolemies and Cleopatra. The literature which developed itself there has often indeed been characterised as wanting in the richness and originality of great intellectual creations; but if the term of production was past, as it was for the old pagan world, and if the time of collecting, sifting, and arranging was come, nowhere was the needful work done so thoroughly and well as at Alexandria, the great university, as more than one have called it, of antiquity.

But it is not with literature and philosophy in general that we have to do. Here, where Philo, the contemporary of our Saviour, had sought to reconcile Plato and Zeno with

Moses and Solomon, and where the most notable forms of the heretical gnosis had their birthplace and their home, there arose the Neo-Platonic school, which sought to do for expiring paganism what Philo had sought to do for expiring Judaism—to reconcile it with the thought and culture of the time by allegorising it and setting in light the deep religious ideas which, it was maintained, lay hidden under the veil of its mythology; and, almost contemporaneously with this effort of dying heathenism, which no staff, whether of philosophy or of power, could support, the first theological institution that aimed at anything beyond elementary instruction was founded in the same city.

This institution was the Catechetical School of Alexandria. That its special object, as has sometimes been represented, was to train catechists, can hardly be established, but certainly this was an end which, especially in such a city as Alexandria, could not but appear of the greatest consequence. We know that throughout the Christian world it had been the custom, before admitting a convert to baptism, to allow a considerable time to elapse, not only for the purpose of observing his walk, and ascertaining his sentiments, but of imparting to him thorough instruction in the doctrines of Christianity. The recipients of this instruction — the Catechumens — were divided into three classes: *ἀκροώμενοι, γονυπίπτοντες, φωτιζόμενοι*; "Audientes," "Genuflectentes," and "Competentes" ["Hearers," "Those who bend the knee," and "Enlightened"]. They were often, now, at least, persons of high culture, who, like Tertullian and Cyprian, had been heathens in early life and embraced Christianity in their riper years. And now, after intellectual weapons had been forged against Christianity —after objections had been raised of various kinds and from different quarters—the cultivated pupil, though drawn to Christianity by the weightiest reason, would probably still have difficulties to contend with, intellectual as well as moral, and it is plain that the instructors,—the Catechists,—whether clerical or lay, could not, in such a city, content themselves with the elementary knowledge which might have been sufficient, or less inadequate, when the memory of men endued from on high for their teaching and their work was still fresh, and when no weapon but force was employed against the truth.

Manifestly then, such a school as that founded at Alexandria was of importance for catechists. But, quite consistently with this special object, the school, as appears from some statements, was attended, not only by Christians younger or older, but also by learned heathens—by persons, at least, who had not yet offered themselves as catechumens. The name of the school seems to have been derived from the method rather than from the object of instruction. We are not to suppose, however, that it was confined to question and answer. Expositions of Scripture were delivered, accompanied with philosophical and dogmatic excursuses.

The date of the founding of this seminary cannot be given exactly, but it falls about the middle of the second century, or perhaps about the year 180[1] A.D. Its founder was Pantænus, who had formerly been a Stoic philosopher, but had been converted to Christianity by a scholar of the apostles. Hardly anything, however, is known of him with certainty, except that he attracted by his discourses his more famous scholar, who became his successor—Titus Flavius Clemens, surnamed "Alexandrinus," to distinguish him from Clemens Romanus. It is doubtful whether he was born at Alexandria or at Athens, but, like eminent men just named, he was born of heathen parents and educated in their principles. To Greek literature he applied himself with great zeal; but when he was converted to Christianity, in which alone he could find full satisfaction for his mind as well as for his heart and conscience, he did not break harshly with anything in his past that could be retained and ennobled. He was not a man who lived in contrasts, like Tertullian, but recognised a process of education in his personal history as he recognised it in the history of the human race, and saw a relative goodness and beauty where the African would have denounced wickedness and deformity.

A man of inquiry, and a humble seeker of knowledge, Clement showed the same ardour in acquiring a thorough and complete acquaintance with the revealed truth as he had shown in the pursuit of heathen learning. He was not content with solitary studies and meditations. He undertook

[1] The school seems to have existed before 180, but for some time from that date Pantænus was the head of it.

great journeys to different countries in the east and in the west—through Greece, Lower Italy, Syria, and Palestine, as well as Egypt. Wherever he found a true Christian teacher, an enlightened and experienced man, from whom he could derive a more accurate acquaintance with the truth which had been delivered from the beginning, immediately he set himself at his feet. He esteemed himself highly favoured in meeting so many venerable men who could impart to him the truth in its purity. Among his teachers, he could boast, were those who had been scholars of the apostles, or scholars of their scholars—who had preserved the doctrines of salvation as they had received them, and accordingly implanted, in their turn, the genuine apostolic seed in the hearts of their disciples.

But there was one man to whom Clement attached himself more closely than to any other, and whom he praises above all the rest of his teachers, calling him the "Sicilian bee," because he plucked the blossoms from the apostolic and prophetic meadows. This was Pantænus, already mentioned as the founder of the Catechetical School, and the first, certainly, under whom it achieved any celebrity. In this school Clement soon found his true vocation. He became the assistant, and eventually the successor, of his master, eclipsing him, as he was destined to be in his turn eclipsed by his great and most illustrious pupil Origen. Like Pantænus, who was the author of several expository works,[1] Clement did not confine himself to oral instruction, but published various writings, some of which are preserved. The necessity of study for the theologian was based on a consideration which has often been presented since. "The apostles and prophets," he said, "were certainly enlightened by the Holy Ghost, but we, if we would understand the meaning of their words, must not count on a similar inspiration. We must avail ourselves of the aids obtained from assiduous culture."

Clement's fame was so great that many educated heathens became his hearers, and not a few of them were gained for Christianity. From the time he was appointed colleague to Pantænus,[2] he continued to labour till the persecution broke

[1] Which are lost.

[2] The date is variously given—189 or 191 A.D. Sometimes he is said to have

out, under Septimius Severus, in 202 A.D. Believing flight to be lawful, and to be justified by the word and the example of the Saviour, he betook himself in the first instance, it is stated, to a Cappadocian bishop, who had formerly been his scholar. He appears to have gone afterwards to Palestine and Syria. Alexander, Bishop of Jerusalem, is said to have recommended him to the Christians of Antioch as a devout and learned man, who had done much in the holy city for the defence and confirmation of the Gospel. But no particulars have been furnished of his last days. He is supposed to have died about 217 A.D.

Clement's style is sometimes called turgid, and his method illogical.[1] Complaints are sometimes heard of the oppressive perplexity of learned matter and allusion which he has diffused over his pages. His figures are numerous and his transitions swift. As one who was initiated, not only into the literature, but into the mysteries of ancient Hellas, he professes sometimes to be reticent because his readers cannot bear the profound instruction he is able to impart; but that his obscurity is in any measure due to the fear of man, as Blunt would have us believe it was, is a supposition which isolates him painfully, and almost ignominiously, from all the other distinguished writers of the first centuries. But why should it be made? If Clement was afraid to appear in his true colours, if he "disguised the Christian teacher in the philosopher," how could he have prevailed upon himself to become a presbyter? and how, above all, could he have placed himself at the head of the one famous Christian school that then existed? His position in Alexandria was more than sufficient for his condemnation if the persecutor sought his life and he was not prepared to recant. But further, though there are many things hard to understand in his writings, this by no means disproves or even obscures the fact that he was a Christian writer; and that he was such we see unmistakably in the very first pages of his *Exhortation to the Greeks*.

The Λόγος πρὸς Ἕλληνας (*Exhortation to the Greeks*) is the

been nominated by the Bishop of Alexandria; sometimes the nomination is ascribed to Bishop Demetrius.

[1] [For Blunt's explanation of the obscurity of Clement's writings, *v. supra*, p. 216. It is repeated in the MS.]

first of Clement's three principal works which are still extant, and which form a whole, connected by the idea of the Logos, who is conceived of as active in the world both before the Incarnation and after it. In the first place, this Divine Teacher of mankind seeks to draw away men from idolatry and heathenish wickedness, and bring them to the true faith. Again, as educator (*Παιδαγωγός*), he continues to watch over and direct those who have entered into the new faith. In this work the principal object is to set forth the duties of the Christian life, as the aim of the former was to exhibit the inferiority of philosophy and the immorality of heathenism. In the third work we have the Divine Logos presented as a revealer of the mysteries which are needful for the perfecting of the redeemed. This treatise, which is the greatest and most important, is called *Στρώματα*—rather *Στρωματεῖς*—a word which properly signifies "variegated carpets" or "coverlets," and corresponds pretty nearly with our term "miscellanies." The name is expressive at once of the variety of contents and of the want of methodical arrangement.

Clement also wrote a small practical work, *Τίς ὁ σωζόμενος πλούσιος* (*Who is the Rich Man that shall be Saved?*), and seven books of an expository nature, called *Ὑποτυπώσεις* (*Adumbrations*), of which only a few fragments are preserved.

1. It is to be noted that Clement recognised the Logos as teaching by philosophy, the term being applied to no particular system, but to all fragments of truth that could be named in the different systems of an eclectic, over whom, however, the Platonic philosophy exercised a predominating influence. In the same manner as Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, and others, admitted that there was in human nature something akin to the Divine Logos, the universal and absolute Divine reason,—that there was a *συμπάθεια*, a *σπέρμα τοῦ λόγου*, a *λόγος σπερματικός*,—and therefore also a partial knowledge of religious and moral truth among the heathen, and particularly among the wiser of their philosophers, so Clement maintained that what the law was to the Jews, philosophy was to the Greeks—a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ.

2. Clement, in positive Christian teaching, finds his starting-point and his standard in the Catholic faith of the Church,

contained in Scripture and tradition, and summarily comprehended in the *regula fidei*. In the Gnosis which he seeks to develop, the faith (πίστις) remains in its objective sense of the faith of the Church, but it becomes ἐπιστημονικὴ πίστις, which we may render "systematic theology." Clement speaks of heretics as sharply as any man could do. "As if a man," he says (*Strom.* vii. 16), "should, similar to those drugged by Circe, become a beast, so he who has spurned the ecclesiastical tradition, and darted off to the opinions of heretical men, has ceased to be a man of God and to remain faithful to the Lord. But he who has returned from this deception on hearing the Scriptures, and turned his life to the truth, is, as it were, from being a man, made a god. For we have, as the source of teaching, the Lord, both by the prophets, the gospel, and the blessed apostles, 'in divers manners and at sundry times,' leading from the beginning of knowledge to the end."

3. The Socratic principle which connected, and almost identified, knowledge with virtue, is by Clement hallowed and extended. The ἐπιστημονικὴ πίστις ("systematic theology") is, even more than the simple faith of the uninstructed, the breath of the soul's life, fructifying the heart, working by love, overcoming the world, and, above all (for Clement dwells so much on this that some have ranked him with the better mystics), leading to devout communion with God, to whom not only the word, the sigh, the aspiration, but even the very thought, ascend as a prayer, indicating that the soul seeks the great and immovable centre of all, where alone it can rest.

CHAPTER XXIX.

ORIGEN.

We come now to the father who is, in more than one respect, the greatest in the first three centuries, namely, Origen. His extensive learning, his mental depth, intensity, and freshness, his patient industry, his fervent piety and love, his blameless life from his youth up: these were all adorned with genuine Christian humility, more rare than his gifts or his reputation. Though his life may be divided into two periods,—that which he spent in Alexandria up till 230 A.D., and that which he spent in Palestine, particularly in Cæsarea, and which extended to the time of his death,—it was only the outward scene of his work that was different in the two periods. The manner and spirit of his labours, and the end he pursued—the development of a Christian Gnosis based on Holy Scripture—were still the same. The character of his labours was little affected by the circumstance that in Palestine he was invested with an ecclesiastical office, and so was authorised to deliver discourses in assemblies for public worship.

But the life of the scholar was by no means untroubled. He suffered from the persecution of the Roman power, and, though no man had more devoted adherents both nigh and far off, he had enemies within the Church, and had to bear envy and jealousy and wounded hierarchical pride.

Origen, surnamed "the Adamantine" (*ἀδαμάντινος—χαλκέντερος*), was born in Alexandria about the year 185 A.D. He was the first-born of Christian parents. His father Leonides was, it has been conjectured, a teacher of the Greek language and literature. Whether he followed this occupation or not, it hardly admits of question that, in the numerous and cultivated community of Alexandria, there were already grammarians and rhetoricians, so that, in this city, at least, the children of those who professed the faith

were not under the necessity of sitting at the feet of heathen masters in order to acquire the knowledge of ancient learning. Leonides, at all events, was the instructor of his son; and, while he introduced him into the elements of general culture, he made it his special care to familiarise him with the Holy Scripture, not allowing a day to pass on which the boy did not learn by heart and repeat considerable portions of it. Even in those early days the spirit, at once critical and mystical, by which Origen was afterwards characterised, manifested itself in a way which caused some embarrassment to the teacher, and which the teacher thought it right to censure or to restrain, but for which he appears to have given God thanks in secret. It is touching to read how, when the boy whom he had somewhat reproved for excessive curiosity was asleep, he bent over the young breast, regarding it with reverence, as a special dwelling-place of the Divine Spirit. It would seem that, whatever difficulties presented themselves to the youth, he never stumbled at the supreme authority of the Scriptures: it never occurred to him to question it. He encountered many passages, however, of which the literal sense was sufficiently plain, but which, he conjectured, would not have been there at all had there not lain under them a deeper, richer, more spiritual meaning.

In his early youth there was added to the paternal instruction that of the eminent teachers of the Catechetical School—certainly of Clement, probably also of Pantænus. That influence, however, was not long enjoyed. We know that the edict of Septimius Severus, issued in 202 A.D., forbidding conversion to Judaism or to Christianity, was in many quarters, and not least in Alexandria, interpreted most widely and cruelly. Christians belonging not only to the city but to the whole country round about, were here tried and executed.

Scarcely had the persecution broken out when Origen gave evidence of qualities which entitle him, not less than his indomitable spirit of inquiry entitle him, to the name "Adamantine." He showed a moral courage, a religious earnestness and devotion, which are not the less admirable because they passed into a dangerous enthusiasm, which in later years he would have in no wise justified. Far from

being intimidated by the sight of the numerous martyrdoms of which his native city was the scene, he was so wrought upon by them in his youthful mind, that he purposed to offer himself voluntarily to the persecutors that he too might win the crown, and nothing could restrain him but the urgent entreaties of his mother. This was before a blow was aimed at his own home. But when his father was apprehended, the youth's desire to share his lot became uncontrollable, and the mother, it is recorded, knew no other way of restraining him than by hiding his clothes—doubtless till she extorted the promise to spare her the agony which she must feel if her first-born accompanied her husband to death. Such enthusiasm as Origen's has, of course, both in ancient and in later times, been more or less common, and more or less tainted with weakness and sin; but, found in a youth of seventeen years, and being the outbreak of a fire which we know never ceased to burn far down and all through, it cannot but attract us. It indicates a rich spiritual nature in the greatest student of Christian antiquity—in one who indeed lived for study, but lived for study because he lived for God.

But more remarkable still than that enthusiasm, or, rather, flowing out of it, and proving how little there was in it of vanity and self-love, was his anxiety that his father, with whom he was not permitted to share death, should not lose the martyr's crown. As the tender recollection of his family, and, among the rest, of the boy who had put to him so many questions, might cause him to waver, he wrote a letter to encourage and strengthen him, and lighten to him the sacrifice. "Beware, my father," he said, "that you do not change your mind for our sake." So wrote the eldest of seven children, bidding his father stand fast, though his life should be taken and his property confiscated. There is not in the annals of ancient persecution a more notable example of that moral and spiritual strength which knows nothing of flesh and blood when the question is between confessing Christ and denying Him. Leonides remained stedfast, and was executed.

In the hour of need a rich and noble lady of Alexandria, who is nowhere named, but who is said to have been a

Christian, interested herself in the bereaved and impoverished family. The lady must have been of a remarkable character, for into her hospitable dwelling she received not only a Christian, but a heretical Gnostic named Paulus, and even treated him as an adopted son. This Paulus is described as a man of great acquirements and eloquence, whose discourses, delivered in the house into which he had been received, were attended not only by heretics but by orthodox Christians. The singular thing, I need hardly explain, is not that, at that period, a Christian should show kindness to a Gnostic or to a heathen, but that she should enter into such close relations with both Origen and Paulus; but the probability is, though this is a mere conjecture, that she sympathised with the latter. She could otherwise hardly have adopted him, not to say that, however friendly to free discussion, she would hardly have allowed her house to be used for the dissemination of heretical tenets which she did not share. As for Origen, he was little more than a boy, and probably the benevolent lady, moved by his affliction, did not concern herself at this time about his opinions, and did not anticipate any collision between him and Paulus. No such collision, indeed, seems to have taken place, though, according to Eusebius, whose testimony on a point of this kind is by many considered very doubtful, while they held free and friendly intercourse, Origen took care that they should never have prayers together.

Origen soon acquired such proficiency in grammar—this word being then understood as comprehending many branches of learning that are now considered separate sciences, such as the knowledge of antiquities, the history of literature, and even theology—that he was able to impart instruction in it, and so to earn a livelihood. But this occupation, though he never undervalued it, could not permanently satisfy him, and soon there was opened for him a path in which he recognised his proper vocation and destiny. It was reserved for him, though scarcely eighteen years of age, to fill up the gap which Clement had left in Alexandria by his flight from the persecution. In any circumstances, it required great courage to step into this vacant place at so perilous a juncture, but the young Origen did so willingly, and, in the first instance, without the official commission of the bishop, though not without

a call from without, which seemed to him to warrant the course he took. Some heathens applied to him with the request to give them instruction in Christianity. Probably his prelections had sometimes brought him on the religious territory, and he had thus inspired some of his hearers with the desire to obtain a more perfect knowledge of the way of salvation. At all events, when we remember the nature of the edict that had recently been issued, it is evident that they must have been deeply in earnest, and so they gave Origen the opportunity of trading with his pound in the way in which it would yield the richest return. His scholars soon became numerous, and the bishop Demetrius, having his attention called to the young teacher, formally and officially appointed him to the head of the Catechetical School. This was not, however, properly speaking, an ecclesiastical office, and required no consecration. Origen, soon finding that his new labours demanded his undivided strength, abandoned his previous occupation, by which he had earned his support. He sold, however, a number of copies of old works, which he had written with his own hand, and the sale brought him an annuity which yielded him four oboli a day, a sum which, as his way of life was extremely simple, even abstemious, was sufficient for his maintenance.[1] He accepted nothing for the instruction he gave in the Catechetical School, although the scholars made him many offers.

A violent renewal of the persecution which took place in the year 203 A.D., on the arrival of proconsul Aquila, sorely tried Origen's devotion, and showed that the former fire had not been extinguished by his father's blood or by the cold blast of poverty and hardship. Plutarch, the first of his scholars, was the first to pay for his conversion with his life. Others also perished by the sword, or, in the language of the historian, received the baptism of fire, sometimes after manifold torture. Their teacher and friend visited them in prison, was with them at their trial, and, when sentence was pronounced, accompanied them to the place of execution and gave them the pastoral kiss. More than once it happened that, when he embraced and encouraged them, the heathen who stood by were filled with fury and were on the point of

[1] [The obolus was rather more than three halfpence.]

stoning him. Plutarch's kinsmen, for example, who did not share the martyr's faith, loudly exclaimed that the teacher was to blame for the disciple's death.

Meanwhile, in spite of the persecution, the number of those who attended the Catechetical School increased, and the curiosity thus excited was so great that a mob, in the midst of which were imperial troops, gathered before Origen's dwelling. He escaped, however, and fled from house to house till the storm was past. Some have expressed astonishment that he was not formally tried and condemned like the brethren whom he consoled and strengthened. The explanation may be that, though there was not much, there was a little regard felt for the letter of the imperial edict. "*Fieri Christianos sub gravi pœna vetuit.*" ["It was forbidden under severe penalty that any should become Christians."] These words might be strained and applied to men who had been converts for a considerable period, especially if they were seeking to convert others, but the most bloodthirsty might hesitate to extend them to one who was notoriously *lacte Christiano educatus* ["reared on the milk of Christianity"], the son of a well-known citizen who had doubtless trained up his children in the religion for which he died.

Origen's asceticism is remarkable. It has created surprise that he, of all men, should take literally, or understand as of universal application, many New Testament sayings and injunctions that are not commonly so interpreted. He mortified the flesh by voluntary and severe privation. He fasted often, and he abstained wholly from wine and flesh. He wore no shoes, and had only one coat. After labouring assiduously during the day, he devoted the greater part of the night to the study of Holy Scripture, which he knew almost entirely by heart; and when he lay down to sleep, it was not on a bed, not even on straw, but on the bare ground. Origenes Adamantinus could live on his four oboli a-day. He wished no more, and some who felt themselves his debtors and would gladly have given him largely of their substance, he grieved deeply by the decided refusal of every gift.

That he understood Matt. xix. 12 literally, and, in con-

sequence of his interpretation, did himself violence, is a story which is related by almost every ecclesiastical historian. We find it, for example, in Kurtz, who, like most others, records it without indicating the slightest doubt of its truth. That the charge was brought against Origen at a later period of his life is undeniable; but the evidence that can be adduced to show that it was well founded is so far from being conclusive that I should scarcely refer to the story at all but for its almost universal acceptance.

For a number of years Origen continued to labour with growing success, which was attested by the conversion of both men and women. In consequence of the increasing numbers, and with the view of gaining more time for the investigation of Divine truth, he associated with himself his friend Heraklas, who was a brother of the martyr Plutarch, and one of his first scholars, and who became subsequently, on the death of Demetrius, Bishop of Alexandria. To this Heraklas, Origen entrusted the task of instructing the younger and weaker, that he might devote his own time to the more advanced.

But, eminently successful as he had been, he began to feel that he was not perfectly equipped for the fulfilment of his vocation. Partly constrained by the character of the men who frequented the Catechetical School, some of them heathens, and some of them heretics, and partly impelled by the thirst for inquiry which was inherent in his nature, he became in his turn a pupil. He betook himself to the most famous philosopher of his time—Ammonius Saccas, the founder of Neo-Platonism, a man who has left nothing in writing, but whose greatness and influence have been celebrated by his scholars Plotinus and Longinus. "Origen," said Porphyry, the scholar of Plotinus, who flourished in the second half of the century, "was a scholar of Ammonius, and made great progress in philosophy; he belonged, however, to the barbarous and corrupt sect of Christians, and so corrupted and falsified the excellent things which he had learned, mixing up outlandish fables with the true doctrine of God and the universe."

On the other hand, it has often been contended, possibly in terms greatly exaggerated, that it was not the Neo-

Platonic philosophy but Christianity that suffered in Origen's hands after his studies under Ammonius Saccas. But, whatever the result, the object of Origen had undoubtedly been that he might enable himself to combat the philosophical opponents of Christianity the better on their own ground, and, while defending the faith with appropriate weapons, to find, at the same time, in heathen wisdom, wherever such could be recognised, appropriate points of connection with Christianity.

But there was another gap in his knowledge which Origen set himself to fill up. He put himself at the feet of a Jew in order to learn Hebrew. This is a remarkable circumstance, as the fathers generally were not only content with the Septuagint, but appear to have regarded it as equally inspired and authoritative with the original.

Origen's blissful and glorious labour, prosecuted for many years, was interrupted by occasional journeys. He visited Rome in the bishopric of Zephyrinus, about 215 A.D. Several years later (218), Julia Mammæa, the mother of the Emperor Alexander Severus, invited him to Antioch when she was residing there. In her desire to converse with the celebrated teacher, she had sent a detachment of soldiers to Alexandria to escort him thence. That Julia Mammæa received some favourable impressions from her illustrious visitor and communicated them to her son, has already been noticed as a thing by no means improbable.

Previously, however, there had been a departure from Alexandria of another sort. It was occasioned by disturbances in the city. Probably it was when the Emperor Caracalla, to whom Papinian had said that it was easier to commit a parricide than to justify it, was present in Alexandria (216 A.D.), and was inflicting shocking cruelties there, particularly upon the scholars. Whatever the precise occasion may have been, Origen left Egypt. He betook himself to Palestine, and took up his residence in Cæsarea. His friends Alexander, Bishop of Jerusalem, and Theoktistus, Bishop of Cæsarea, urged him to deliver discourses in the church, and Origen, though not yet a presbyter, complied. Demetrius, the Bishop of Alexandria, was incensed at this violation of order, and wrote violently to the bishops of

Palestine, who, however, saw nothing wrong in allowing the catechist to preach, especially as he preached in their presence. Demetrius could not be appeased. He insisted on Origen's return, and Origen, it is said, obeyed the summons. Possibly, however, the love of home and of the old library, which he might again indulge without at least immediate danger, had as great an effect as the command of the indignant Bishop.

The various distinctions which Origen had acquired—the summons to Arabia addressed to him by the governor of that land, and the similar invitation received from Julia Mammæa —excited the envy and jealousy of others, probably of Demetrius the Bishop himself. We have just seen that Demetrius could not control his indignation, and entered into a violent correspondence with the bishops of Jerusalem and Cæsarea, because they had invited Origen to preach in the public assemblies of Christians, he being invested with no ecclesiastical office. Subsequently, about the year 228 A.D., when Origen was summoned to Achaia to conduct some business, of which nothing is known with certainty, he took his way over Palestine, and at Cæsarea the Bishop Theoktistus, with the concurrence of Alexander, Bishop of Jerusalem, ordained him a presbyter, probably because they were again desirous that he should address the churches, and sought to overcome all objections by conferring on him the qualification that, in the view of his spiritual superior at Alexandria, was absolutely indispensable.

But Demetrius, who had once been a warm friend, was not to be satisfied; and for Origen to have received office from other hands than his was in his eyes as great an offence as that of preaching without holding any ecclesiastical office at all.

When the object of his displeasure returned in 230 A.D., all was changed. Origen was suspected, distrusted, and charged with all sorts of heresy, and, to escape the storm which was gathering, he departed, consoling himself with that passage of John, with which he happened then to be occupied in preparing his Commentary on that gospel, that represents Jesus as commanding the winds and waves of the sea.

The tempest burst forth soon after his departure. A synod

of Egyptian bishops and some presbyters declared him unworthy of the office of catechist, and excluded him from the fellowship of the Church; and a second assembly, consisting of bishops entirely under the influence of Demetrius, deposed him from the office of presbyter. It is probable that in this high-handed procedure, to which Demetrius was the chief instigator, other motives than jealousy may be justly traced. The hierarchical spirit might be too powerful to be subdued by any regard to the peculiar greatness of Origen and the eminent success with which his work in Alexandria had been crowned; and, moreover, the departure—the flight, as it would be called—of the man whose orthodoxy was questioned, and whose presbyterial dignity had been obtained without the consent of his own bishop, might be construed as a determination not to submit, but to keep the office to which he had been appointed in a way that seemed illegitimate. Whatever the motives, the resolution to depose Origen was not only adopted at Alexandria, but communicated in a circular letter to the churches throughout the world, and was recognised by the Church of Rome, and by all other churches, with the exception of those of Palestine, Phœnicia, Arabia, and Achaia.

And to whom could Origen, the greatest Christian lecturer of his age, now condemned and degraded by the bishops of his own land, betake himself but to his tried friends in Palestine, Theoktistus of Cæsarea, and Alexander of Jerusalem? The original home of Christianity was henceforth his own. He visited the holy spots where had trod the blessed feet of Him who would take His disciple up though all men should forsake him. The exile lingered some time at Jerusalem, as if he sought rest at the grave of his Lord. It was not here that he settled, however, but in Cæsarea, the seat of the governor, a city so rich in means of culture as almost to vie with Alexandria, and, above all, the place where the gates of the heavenly kingdom had been opened to the apostles. In this city, flourishing when Jerusalem was but a shadow of its past glory, the man of adamant prosecuted his old labours as one who belonged, not to Alexandria, nor, indeed, to Cæsarea, but to his Master and the world. His banishment, indeed, only contributed to the wider spread of his influence—a

result which might be illustrated by many other cases in the history of the Church.

Demetrius died in 232 A.D., a year after decision was given against Origen; but though the deposed teacher was succeeded by Heraklas, once his own pupil, and then his fellow-labourer in the catechetical school, we hear nothing of a recall, and there was no indication of a change of feeling at Alexandria when, after sixteen years, Heraklas likewise was removed by death, and was followed by Dionysius, another pupil of the great exile. The natural explanation is that the Egyptian clergy were too deeply committed to the course into which they were led by Demetrius to be able to retreat from it.

Among the pupils who studied under Origen when he opened at Cæsarea a school similar to that which he had conducted at Alexandria, was Gregory, surnamed Thaumaturgus, afterwards bishop of Neo-Cæsarea. He had come from Pontus on some family business, with the intention of proceeding, immediately after its settlement, to Berytus, there to study Roman law. The career of an advocate was that to which his thoughts were directed when he arrived at Cæsarea, but his visit to this city, taken by the way, was the turning-point in his life. His good angel, he said, had brought him hither. Five years he remained the pupil of Origen, whom, according to his own comparison, he loved as Jonathan loved David. "This man," he added, "binds us, and holds us fast with bonds so mighty, that when we remove to a distance, he does not let go our souls."

But Origen was again exposed to persecution. Maximin, the murderer of Alexander Severus, turned against the Christians, and particularly their teachers, the hatred which he bore his predecessor. Origen withdrew, betaking himself to Cæsarea in Cappadocia, where he had a friend in the bishop Firmilian, who sided strongly with Cyprian in the controversy about the baptism of heretics. Here he lived for two years in the deepest retirement in the house of a Christian lady named Juliana. In this house he found an unexpected treasure in a collection of valuable books, of which Juliana had come into possession as heiress of that Symmachus who is known by his translations of the Old Testament, and who

also devoted himself to exegetical labours. Here Origen wrote his *Exhortation to Martyrdom*, which was addressed to his friends Ambrosius and Protoktetus, who had been imprisoned, but had evidently been liberated on the death of the Emperor. On the occurrence of that event, which brought a cessation of the persecution, Origen returned to Cæsarea in Palestine, and there continued his studies, occupying himself chiefly with expository labour. Various works, particularly his great work against Celsus, were written at the urgent request of his friend Ambrosius, a man of considerable means, who was wont to emphasise his entreaties by paying a number of ready writers, who wrote at Origen's dictation.

He was not suffered to end in peace a life which, as we should say, had begun so sadly, and had been so often troubled. As he had himself predicted in his writing against Celsus, the peaceful days which had been enjoyed under Philip the Arabian, with whom, and with whose wife, he is said to have held correspondence, came to a close. This was in 250 A.D. When the Decian persecution broke out, Origen was seized—whether in Cæsarea or in Tyre is not certain. He was cast into a dark prison, an iron chain was put upon his neck, and all conceivable means, short of torturing him to death, were used to make him recant. But the son of Leonides, now an old man, bore all with patience, and survived Decius, upon whose death he was released. His friend Alexander of Jerusalem had died a martyr, and his friend Ambrosius was no more. Origen was in poverty, worn out by years of incessant labour and by cruel sufferings, but we are told that this man, after his release from prison, where he had endured agonies which doubtless hastened his end, continued to write, and to write for the comfort of such as were in sorrow and distress. He died at Tyre in the year 254 A.D., and there his grave was long pointed out. The merchants and the traffickers of the crowning city had their good things, but the pride thereof has been stained. Origen's pure and great name will live, preserved by his own page, though in that land where no greater child had been born from the days of Moses, the paper reeds by the brooks, and everything sown by the brooks, should wither and be driven away and be no more. But reputation, during or after his lifetime, was not what Origen sought first.

Whether he seemed to be winning or losing it, he continued worthy of his name Adamantinus, for he was "stedfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."

The writings of Origen were so numerous that, in the language of Jerome, he wrote more than most men are wont to read; yet this indefatigable author had been most reluctant to take pen in hand except for transcribing. It was only by the urgent solicitation of Ambrosius that he was prevailed upon to compose for the world. Ambrosius had been converted by him from the heretical to the Christian Gnosis. He was a man of eminence and wealth, and he not only provided transcribers but—what was scarcely less needful—purchased for him a number of expensive manuscripts. This man, whose support was extremely valuable, and, being offered, not for a personal but for a public end, was not rejected, Origen used to call his ἐργοδιώκτης—his "taskmaster," as we might render it. Many of the books published with the assistance of this friend are now lost, or are only partially preserved. Some of them, however, are almost entire, and one or two of them it is necessary to notice. Origen may be called the founder of the science of textual criticism. By comparing the Septuagint with some other Greek translations of the Old Testament, as well as through disputations in which he engaged with Jews, he found that the commonly received text often failed to render the original correctly. There arose, therefore, a need which Origen, whose knowledge of Hebrew was never thorough, did not attempt to meet by himself publishing a new version; but, by a sort of synoptical juxtaposition of the Seventy with other Greek translations, and with the Hebrew text, he at least furnished the means of ascertaining by the comparison the extent of the discrepancies, and so, in most cases, the true sense of the original.

The arrangement of the work was as follows: in the first column was the Hebrew text in Hebrew characters; in the second, the Hebrew text in Greek characters, in the third, the version of Aquila; in the fourth, that of Symmachus; in the fifth, the Septuagint; in the sixth, that of Theodotion: so there were six columns—the *Hexapla*. The principle of arrangement was the degree of close and rigid adherence to the original. But in some parts there were more than six

columns, Origen availing himself of translations of certain portions of the Old Testament: hence *Octapla*, and sometimes even *Enneapla*. But there was also an edition called the *Tetrapla*, containing four versions—those, namely, of Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion, and the Seventy, being the same as the *Hexapla*, without its two columns for the Hebrew. It is believed that marginal notes were added to this critical apparatus; but, from the nature of the edition, few copies of it were needed, and though the greatest ecclesiastical writers of the immediately succeeding ages profited by it, and introduced citations from it into their pages, the work, as a whole, has long ago perished. Origen's own copy or copies having been discovered fifty years after his death, probably at Tyre, fell into the hands of the martyr Pamphilus of Cæsarea, and remained in the library there (where Jerome saw it and took advantage of it) till 652 A.D., when Cæsarea was captured by the Saracens. Various editions of the fragments of the *Hexapla* that could be collected have been published more than once since the beginning of last century.

In the time of Origen alarm was already excited by the number of various readings in the New Testament manuscripts, arising partly from negligence and partly from wilful corruption. It is well that attention was early called to the evil, though it might be called to it then, as it was at later times, in exaggerated language. Origen appears to have devoted much time to critical inquiries in this territory also; and, though he did not undertake a complete recension of the text of the New Testament, there were at least in circulation, according to the testimony of Jerome, manuscripts of portions of it revised and amended by him. And so, among other obligations under which he laid the Church of the future, we owe it in great measure to him that the corruption did not spread so widely as otherwise it would have.

Origen's exegetical writings consisted partly of Scholia, called also σημειώσεις,—brief notes on detached passages that seemed specially to need explanation,—and Commentaries (τόμοι), embracing a great part of the Old Testament and the greater part of the New. With these are usually classed his Homilies, or popular expositions, delivered after his sixteenth year.

His character as a commentator is thus given by a French writer:[1] "He commonly says everything which occurs to him with respect to some word that he meets with, and he affects great refinement in his speculations, which often leads him to resort to airy and allegorical meanings. But notwithstanding these faults, we find in his Commentaries on the New Testament profound learning, and an extensive acquaintance with everything respecting religion; nor is there any writer from whom we can learn so well as from him what the ancient theology was. He had carefully read a great number of writers of whom we scarcely know the names."

That in these Commentaries, and also in the Homilies, allegory should abound does not surprise us when we remember that their author was the countryman and the student of Philo, and the pupil of Clement, and of the founder of the Neo-Platonic School. Origen's method is not new, but his manner of defending it is noteworthy. He justifies it psychologically as a trichotomist. As a man consists of body, soul, and spirit, so, he taught, Holy Scripture has a threefold sense—a literal (by which, however, he means not the grammatico-historical sense, but that of the naked letter), a moral, and a spiritual. Besides the first, which is to be regarded as the body, there is a second, the moral, which corresponds with the soul, the historical as well as the didactic portions containing lessons and warnings which form a moral mirror for the human race. But still higher—vastly higher—he places the third sense, corresponding with the spirit, by which are apprehended not only our actual relations to the unseen and eternal, but conditions and events in the supra-mundane, pre-mundane, and post-mundane universe. To penetrate these deeper mysteries is the privilege only of him who enjoys the illumination of the Spirit that inspired the Scriptures.

It is manifest that Origen, the father of textual criticism—the man who spent three years of his life in compiling the *Hexapla*, was far from being the slave of the letter. Too far! The main charge brought against him with reason is that he did not give the letter its due place. The man that insisted that Celsus should have either rejected all or accepted all in

[1] Quoted in Smith's *Dict. of Biog. and Mythol.* [Richard Simon].

the gospel history, denied in many cases that the literal sense, sometimes even when it coincided with the grammatico-historical, was a true sense at all, although there the passage stood, inspired, and inspired, whether he could always discover the deep mystical meaning or not, for a wise end. The literal sense, he maintains, is not always true, there being intermingled with the narratives not a few things whereby the attention of the reader might be recalled by the impossibility of the case to an examination of the inner meaning. On this point let us hear his own words, and, though we may by no means accept all his illustrations, we shall admit that he has something to say for his theory:—

"Who is there, pray, possessed of understanding, that will regard the statement as appropriate, that the first day, and the second, and the third, in which also both evening and morning are mentioned, existed without sun, and moon, and stars—the first day even without a sky? And who is found so ignorant as to suppose that God . . . planted a visible and palpable tree of wood, so that any one eating of it with bodily teeth should obtain life, and, eating again of another tree, should come to the knowledge of good and evil?" So of God walking, and Adam hiding himself, in the garden. "The departure of Cain from the presence of the Lord will manifestly cause a careful reader to inquire what is the presence of God, and how any one can go out from it. How could the devil literally show from a high mountain the kingdoms of the world, and how the kings of these kingdoms be glorified by men? The passage concerning smiting on the right cheek cannot, for more than one reason, be taken literally, for a man, unless he happen to have a bodily defect, first strikes the left cheek with the right hand. So, when both eyes have the property of sight, why should the responsibility of the offence committed by that sense be transferred to one eye, and that the right? The Holy Spirit himself makes it plain that we are not to be edified by the letter alone or by anything in it, but that many things were interwoven which, when understood in their inner meaning, give forth a law which is advantageous to men and worthy of God."[1]

[1] This extract, which is abridged, is from the Περὶ ἀρχῶν (*De Principiis*) [Bk.

To the deep and mystical meaning Origen attaches vast importance. Our eyes must be opened if we are to behold wondrous things out of God's law. The treasure is in earthen vessels—in the vulgar and unpolished vessels of words, as he says in the *Περὶ ἀρχῶν*. We shall sometimes find three senses; we may expect to find at least two. These earthen vessels contain two or three firkins apiece. Take an illustration of one containing three: "The latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose." The moral sense, equally with the literal, is obvious, since the external act cannot, of course, be considered apart from the corresponding sentiment. But what is the treasure contained in the earthen vessel? To contemplate Christ in His low estate as He dwelt among us, and understand in the same degree the mystery of the Incarnation, is to unloose the latchet of one of His shoes. But there are two shoes. Christ stooped lower than the dust of earth. As David tells us in the Sixteenth Psalm, and Peter in his First Epistle, He descended in spirit to Hades; and to comprehend something of the mystery of that descent by which He became Lord of the dead as well as the living is to unloose the latchet of the other shoe.

How arbitrary, fanciful, unnatural this is, need not be said. The instance is one of a thousand. In his own allegorising style, he compares the Old and New Testaments in the mere letter with the ass and the ass's colt: they must be loosed by the disciples. The deeper senses must be disclosed before Christ can make His triumphant entry on the ass and the colt into the city—the soul of the believer.

If anything in the way of interpretation could be worse than Origen's perpetual hunt after allegorical meanings, it was the opposite extreme of servile literalism, which, as Origen himself endeavoured to show, was the mother of unbelief, as in the case of the Jews, and of heresy, as in the case of the

iv. ch. i., *Ante-Nicene Christ. Lib.*, vol. x. p. 315], the first considerable work of systematic theology. This work is preserved entire, at least in the Latin translation. Its object was to bring to greater perfection, and to present as a coherent whole, the subject which had been treated in the *Στρωματεῖς* of Clement, and in his own *Στρωματεῖς* also.

There is a difference of opinion as to the meaning of the title *ἀρχαί*. Does it denote the *στοιχεῖα*—the fundamental principles of all things—or, as most take it to signify, the fundamental articles of the Christian faith?

Marcionites—the cause of an unworthy conception of God, and therefore of immorality, in the case both of many Jews and of many heretics, and of multitudes who could be classed with neither. It is but just to say further, that notwithstanding his baseless, airy interpretations, he not only shows himself in his Commentaries, as in his other writings, to be a man of solid and profound learning, and of acute, original mind, but uniformly respects the tradition of the Church, which in his day was pure, and, while he sets forth vital truth in accordance with this "rule of faith," does not call in question any of the main facts recorded in Scripture.

I cannot speak at any length of Origen as an apologist. Let me give one passage from his work against Celsus:—

"What god, or spirit, or prudent man," asks Celsus, "would not, on foreseeing that such events were to befall him, avoid them if he could? whereas he threw himself headlong into those things which he knew beforehand were to happen." "And yet Socrates," answers Origen, "knew that he would die after drinking the hemlock, and it was in his power, if he had allowed himself to be persuaded by Crito, by escaping from prison, to avoid these calamities; but nevertheless he decided, as it appeared consistent with right reason, that it was better for him to die as became a philosopher than to retain his life in a manner unbecoming one. Leonidas, also, the Lacedæmonian general, knowing that he was on the point of dying with his followers at Thermopylæ, did not make any effort to preserve his life by disgraceful means, but said to his companions, 'Let us go to breakfast, as we shall sup in Hades.' And where is the wonder if Jesus, knowing all things that were to happen, did not avoid them but encountered what he foreknew, when Paul, His own disciple, having heard what would befall him when he went up to Jerusalem, proceeded to face the danger, reproaching those who were weeping around him, and endeavouring to prevent him from going up to Jerusalem? Many also of our contemporaries, knowing well that if they made a confession of Christianity, they would be put to death, but that if they denied it, they would be liberated and their property restored, despised life and voluntarily selected death for the sake of their religion."[1]

[1] Bk. I. ch. viii. The whole work consists of eight books.

Origen is commonly called the "father of preaching," though the designation is more liable to be misunderstood than the designation of him as the father of textual criticism and of systematic theology, or as the first of commentators. The title is given him because he is the first divine who has bequeathed discourses to posterity, although, undoubtedly, there are treatises of an earlier date which may have been in great part composed of matter originally delivered to the assembled people. Origen was never a pastor. When he began to preach he was not even a presbyter. Of the two hundred Homilies that have been preserved, few were written down by Origen himself; most were written by shorthand writers after he was sixty years of age. The Greek original, however, of almost all of them has been lost, and in the Latin translations liberties have been taken on some doctrinal points. But though the material for judging may not be complete, it is ample enough to justify the conclusion that the "father of preaching" was not a preacher of the highest order—though, of course, it may seem hard to compare him with the pulpit orators who followed. He has expressed many just views on preaching. The great business of the preacher, he held, was not to fight with pagan philosophers, or to plunge with the Gnostics into the unfathomable depths of the eternal past, but to dig wells in the field of Scripture and draw plenteous water, not only for those who were of the household of faithful Abraham, but for the camels also—that is, for the ignorant and perverse. The history of the Church from the days of the apostles had told of no more devout, self-denying servant of God, and yet he was so far from counting himself to have attained that, as we are told by a venerable father, once when he was about to deliver a discourse, his eye fell accidentally on Ps. l. 16: "What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth," and he burst into tears and could not utter a word. But, though he was a man of most ardent religious nature, we do not read of his audience at any time being overcome. He had hearers, some of them of great eminence, who were interested and edified vastly more by him than by any other, but he had no occasion, as Chrysostom often had, and Augustine sometimes had, to rebuke the multitude for

their boisterous applause. He was interrupted, however. Some of the people, forgetful of the time and place, and as little sensible of the peculiar greatness of Origen as he was himself, instead of listening to him, talked to one another, and at times, in the more remote parts of the building, were not only voluble but vociferous. The clear stream of his eloquence, though it might be full, even to overflowing, never became a torrent. Sincere and grave, though possibly not always incorrupt, he was tranquil and composed. There was no tragic vein in him, though his life was sometimes tragic enough, and it lay not at all in his nature—and, down to the dark ages, it was not expected of the sacred orator—to entertain his audience with low comedy. He was no stranger to the obvious homiletical principle that the preacher should adapt himself to a mixed multitude,—he himself inculcated it, and acted upon it,—but he came down to the people only in the sense of striving to make himself intelligible to them, in which, if they chose to attend, he was generally successful.

We are not to suppose that allegory was the rock on which Origen split. His mystical interpretations were not incomprehensible, and they were not necessarily less effective than the rest of his discourse. Many great preachers have allegorised in a way most attractive and edifying; usually, no doubt, offering their imagery as accommodation or application, and not as exposition. But take the greatest of preachers between Chrysostom and Luther. St. Bernard found everywhere, like Origen, the threefold sense—the garden, as he called the literal sense, and then the cellar, in neither of which he was wont to linger, and the bridal chamber, as he called the mystical. From any text in which the redeemed soul communes with its Lord who has betrothed it to Himself for ever, he could rise, and raise his hearers with him, to holy and rapt contemplation, believing all the while that he was led by the Spirit into the truth of which every word and every particle of Scripture was full.

It was not, then, because he allegorised beyond limits which no one has defined, but which all agree he transgressed, that Origen's fame as an orator does not approach that which he won as a teacher, a theologian, and an apologist. It is to

be noticed, however—and the remark applies to other productions than his Homilies—that Origen is by no means always confident that he is right in his exegesis. He who is careful to tell us that he could not dogmatise on the tenets which were afterwards called "Origenistic"—such as the restoration of all fallen spirits to their first estate—does not propound his mystical meanings as infallibly the sense of Scripture, claiming no more authority for them than for his other private opinions.

And with all his allegorising tendencies, Origen believed in the name of Christ just as the least speculative of his brethren in Alexandria or in Cæsarea, and it was given him, as we have seen, to suffer for Christ's name. His persecution was borne with meekness. He could hit the dead Celsus hard enough at times, but against his worst living foes he was never bitter. On the other hand, he was never intoxicated by the eulogies of his friends. If any one ever kept his heart with all diligence and, with God's help, watched not in vain, it was Origen. And now all men not only recognise his singular gifts and influence, but judge mildly of him even from a doctrinal point of view, declaring with one consent that, if he sometimes erred, and could not be canonised, he cannot be classed with conscious and formal heretics. His last days were spent in Tyre. The very name of the city where he was to find his resting-place would remind such a man of the everlasting rock on which he had built in youth. He was buried with the honourable of the earth, whose memorial has perished with them. We cannot well conceive of Origen's spirit lingering over his grave as loth to leave the body that it loved; for, though he was anything but a pessimist, the world was to him a vast penitentiary, in which fallen souls are confined and punished, each in its own cell. From his cell he was now released. He had gained the spiritual body of which Paul speaks, to be a shining orb. A shining orb he remains below, and we know the promise his Lord gave to the righteous for the Kingdom above. In truth, with one, or, perhaps, two exceptions, Origen was the greatest gift which the Father of Lights bestowed upon the Church during fourteen centuries.

The pervading principle of Origen was that the end must correspond with the beginning. He began every homily with a prayer, and ended it with a doxology. His aim was not to leave a name "aere perennius"; it is rather expressed in the words with which he closes the great work of his old age: "Glory be to Thee, our God: Glory be to Thee!"

CHAPTER XXX.

THE CHRISTIANS AND THE ROMAN POWER—CONSTANTINE AND MAXENTIUS.

The names of Trajan, Marcus Aurelius, Decius, and Diocletian, which mark the most important epochs in the history of the persecutions of the first centuries, mark at the same time glorious epochs in the mighty career of conquest by which the Christian religion ultimately triumphed over the paganism of the Roman world. The persecutions passed through different phases, naturally becoming, as a rule, more widespread and violent at every new outburst, as the votaries of the new faith became, during the intervals of tranquillity, more numerous and formidable. Doubtless there was in the Church, in the character and life of its members, much to deplore, both in times of peace and in times of suffering, but it ought to be acknowledged, and it will readily be acknowledged if we judge fairly, not trying the votaries and the fruits of the new religion by an ideal standard, but comparing them with the votaries and the fruits of the old religions which were being supplanted, that the graces which were being cherished and evinced were much more conspicuous. It was with reason that Cyprian regarded the Church as wearing a righteous crown, and pronounced her blessed of her Lord, her garments white through the good works of the brethren, and red through the blood of the martyrs, whose glorious company he himself was to join. "Neither the tulip nor the rose was wanting," he could exclaim; "neither was wanting in the garland which adorned her head." And Origen, writing against Celsus, could say: "The work of Christianity manifests itself throughout the world. Where Christian communities have been founded, their members have been converted from a thousand vices, and at the present day the name of Jesus produces a wonderful meekness, phil-

anthropy and gentleness in those who do not assume faith in the doctrine of God and Christ for the sake of earthly advantages, but who sincerely accept it." That was the testimony of the most inimical of scoffers as well as the most eminent of apologists. Lucian says: "These unhappy men have come to believe that they are immortal; therefore they do not fear death, but meet it willingly. They who deny the gods of the Greeks and adore the crucified sophist are persuaded that all are brethren and hold their property as a common good." The heathen were astonished at men who, as one of them expressed it, loved before they became acquainted with one another; and not less, assuredly, was their astonishment at finding that the same men were placable and merciful; that they requited evil with good; that they interested themselves in those whom the heathen cast out, not only caring for the living, but giving decent burial to the bodies which, in time of pestilence, were cast into the streets. The graces of the Christians—their patience and fortitude on the one hand, their holy and benevolent activity on the other—have been, by both friend and foe, ranked among the secondary causes of the progress of Christianity.

But, if men were often, in the first instance, won without the word, they were won to the word, and to Him who gave it. And the word was nigh unto them. It dropped from the lips of those whose lives adorned it, and it is a most notable circumstance that, though there was a regular ministry from the beginning, there is scarcely anything said in the history of the second and third centuries of Christians who could, in any distinctive sense, be called missionaries. The trader on his journey, the soldier in the camp, the slave in the house, the philosopher among his disciples, as well as the friend among his friends and the mother among her children: these all did their part in diffusing the knowledge of the truth which they felt to be of God, and to which, they were assured, God would give the victory.

While Christianity grew and flourished, paganism had even more rapidly decayed and withered. We learn from the testimony of Pliny in his famous letter to Trajan that, as early as the beginning of the second century, the temples were in some parts of the Empire almost deserted, and beasts

intended for sacrifice found no market. A century later, Tertullian had the courage to say in the face of the heathen that the worship which they offered to the gods was not only vain in itself, but vain in the consciousness of the worshippers: that they were no longer in earnest with it, but that it had become a dead custom, or a mere pastime. Neo-Platonism, by its philosophical interpretations of the ancient myths, which had once been received in simple faith, seemed to kindle in some individual minds an artificial enthusiasm for the "new-old," as it has been expressed, but it was utterly powerless with the masses, and eventually it could not but undermine the edifice which it was designed, and appeared for the time fitted, to sustain and secure. Paganism had its sincere votaries, especially in the country districts, but it owed its prolonged existence mainly to that conservatism in religion which springs rather from aversion to the new, and fear of the new, than from attachment to the old.

That the Christians had become a great power in the Empire is evinced most clearly by the history of the last Roman persecution—that which took place under Diocletian at the beginning of the fourth century. We know what the Emperor's principles were. Early in his reign he had, in an edict passed against the Manichees, declared it to be the greatest crime for men to assail the religion which had once for all been established by their forefathers, and he had announced his determination to punish the obstinate, perverse men against whom his decree was directed. Already, if he would act consistently with this principle, it behoved him to take measures for the extirpation, not only of a single sect, but of all Christians, the religion of Catholics as well as of heretics being a constant protest against the old polytheism to which, partly on personal and partly on political grounds, he was devoted. And yet against the Christians generally he did not venture to proceed to extremities till the nineteenth year of his reign, and the resolution to adopt severe measures was not come to till a whole winter had been spent in secret council at Nicomedia.

Some have held that, though the Cæsar Galerius and the Neo-Platonist Hierocles, governor of Bithynia, are commonly represented as the most passionate enemies of the Christians,

and the chief instigators to the persecution of the odious sect; though pagan priests, too, are sometimes represented[1] as clamouring in the ear of the hesitating Emperor, and protesting that it was vain for them to sacrifice, since the gods would have none of their sacrifices as long as the hated sect which followed the Crucified was suffered to exist; though policy, philosophy, and priestcraft, all had their spokesmen during that sad winter, urging the apparently vacillating Diocletian to a decisive blow—yet the result reached was in nowise due to the arguments and entreaties which were addressed to him; for, when his purpose was formed, it was in accordance with his character to consult, or give himself the air of consulting, the men of his confidence in matters of importance, and to listen to them with the greatest deference It had long been his resolution to crown his so-called political restoration with a restoration of religion, and this great work he had reserved for the year immediately preceding his *vicennalia*,—the celebration of the twentieth year of his reign,—which, according to a long-cherished plan, was to be followed by his voluntary resignation. Now, we may well believe that unity of religion had all along been a thing dear to his heart, and even that it entered essentially into his conception of the unity of the Empire. The latter, though the contrary might at first sight appear to be the case, he regarded it as his high duty to maintain, and his high distinction to represent. For though, in the year 286 A.D., he had made Maximian his colleague in the Empire with the title of Augustus, and, in the year 292 A.D., had appointed the two Cæsars, Galerius and Constantius Chlorus, the one to assist himself in the administration and defence of the east, and the other to assist Maximian in the administration and defence of the west, yet he remained himself the centre of the imperial unity, was recognised as such by those whom he called his colleagues, and, indeed, claimed to be thus regarded by adopting the name Jovius, by which he plainly indicated that his power was supreme, and representative of that of the father of the gods, and by which he at the same time indicated that religion entered into his idea of imperial unity. But to desire an end and to accomplish it by any means—by bloodshed and

[1] Lactantius.

torture and death if necessary—are two very different things. The simple and natural explanation of the long delay was the great number and influence of the Christians, which forced upon the Emperor the conviction that the work of extermination was extremely perilous, and, if possible at all, by no means easy.

The father of ecclesiastical history thus begins his account of his own time:—"To give a satisfactory account of the extent and the nature of that glory and liberty with which the doctrine of piety towards the supreme God as announced to the world through Christ has been honoured among all, both Greeks and barbarians, before the persecution of our day, this, we say, were an undertaking beyond our power. As a proof, we might refer to the clemency of the Emperors towards our brethren, to whom they even entrusted the government of provinces, exonerating them from all anxiety as it regarded sacrificing, on account of that singular goodwill that they entertained toward the doctrine. Why should we speak of those in the imperial palaces, and the sovereigns themselves, who granted their domestics the liberty of declaring themselves freely, in word and deed, on religion, and, I would say, almost the liberty of boasting of their freedom in the practice of the faith?"

But he acknowledges, as had been acknowledged by distinguished writers before some former persecutions, that many in the Church had become most slothful, and might fall before the persecution came. Then, quoting from Jeremiah, he says, "The Lord in His anger darkened the daughter of Zion, and hurled from heaven to earth the glory of Israel. Neither did He remember His footstool in the day of His wrath. But the Lord also overwhelmed all the beauty of Israel, and tore down all His walls."

I do not now give an account of the sufferings which followed the publication of Diocletian's edicts, the three first of which (303 A.D.), as we saw, were directed against Bibles, churches, and Christian ministers conspicuous in office and in station, the fourth (304 A.D.) being directed against all Christians, declaring all who refused to sacrifice liable to torture and death. In the following year—the year before his abdication—the Emperor gave orders that the last penalty

should not be exacted, returning, probably, to the conviction that had restrained him during the greater part of his reign, and which had been shaken by Galerius, Hierocles, and the priests—the conviction, namely, that the work of extermination was hopeless. But with a lamentable inconsistency, of which, however, examples have often been found, the ruler who would not stain the Empire with the blood of citizens, and thus, as it was expressed, bring upon his reign the reproach of cruelty, still sanctioned the infliction of punishments which, though short of death, were sometimes barbarous. There are many instances of men losing both an eye and a foot through the application of a hot iron, and then being condemned to labour in the mines. But as the life was not taken, all, according to Eusebius, were expected to acknowledge the "great clemency" of the Emperor.

The sufferings of the Christians by no means ended with the abdication of Diocletian and that of his colleague Maximian, which took place on the same day, the 1st of May, 305 A.D. But there was at hand a revolution toward which the centuries had been working; for which, too, Nero, Trajan, Aurelius, and Diocletian, though naturally and justly regarded by the Church as vessels of wrath and heaven-sent scourges, had been preparing—a revolution which, indeed, if we look only at the immediate sequence of events, may with some plausible ground be called, and has been called, the precious fruit of the persecutions, especially the last, the most protracted, extensive, and ruthless of them all, but which is for ever associated with the name of a man whose character has been variously judged—who is considered by some to have been converted by a miracle; by others never to have been converted at all—but who stands out as the conscious and free instrument by which that revolution was accomplished. He was "Pagan and Christian," says Stanley, "orthodox and heretical, liberal and fanatical, not to be imitated or admired, but much to be remembered, and deeply to be studied."[1]

Constantinus, the son of Constantius Chlorus, was born at Naissus, in Moesia, on the 28th February, 274 A.D.[2] Though the name of his mother, Helena, who was a lady of humble rank, has become celebrated in the history of the Church, yet

[1] [*Eastern Church*, p. 220.] [2] According to some, 272 A.D.

her memory is associated with nothing that took place before the later period of the imperial reign. It cannot even be determined whether the son received the first favourable impressions of Christianity from his mother, or the mother from her son. The father, Constantius Chlorus, who, as we have seen, was made Cæsar in 292 A.D., was elevated (as was also Galerius) to the dignity of Augustus in 305 A.D., when Diocletian and Maximian resigned. Chlorus, who reigned in Gaul and Spain and Britain, distinguished himself to such a degree by sparing the property of his subjects that his colleagues in power called him to account for neglecting his opportunities. As he had accumulated no treasure, they sent ambassadors to reproach him with his poverty. It is narrated that he called together the richest people out of the provinces, and obtained through their voluntary gifts a vast sum, which he showed to the ambassadors, with the declaration that, though he had not collected it till now, it had been kept faithfully for him by the original possessors. It is needless to say that, as soon as the ambassadors departed, he insisted that those faithful guardians of his treasure should take back what they had so freely given. It is also narrated of Constantius Chlorus that he took no part in the persecution of the Christians, or—for the accounts are somewhat conflicting—that he did persecute them, but reluctantly, and because, being still Cæsar, he was constrained, if he would retain his power, to show some respect to the will of Diocletian. So it is said of him by Lactantius that, though he destroyed churches—walls which had been erected and could be rebuilt by the hand of man—he left inviolate the true temple of God, which is in the worshippers. In a famous edict on religion, which will be spoken of afterwards, Constantine declares that, while the other rulers had been guilty of barbarous cruelty, his father had distinguished himself by the mildness of his administration, and in all his undertakings had been wont to invoke God with extraordinary piety. It is not, however, to be inferred from this testimony that Constantius offered Christian worship, the probability being that he was an eclectic, so that, if Constantine's religious sentiment be called, as it sometimes is, a paternal inheritance, the justice of the expression can be admitted only in so far as it might be

applied to any devout heathen who, while he did not renounce the old, recognised some good in the new religion. There are some, indeed, who would not hesitate to affirm that Constantine himself was half heathen, half Christian, to the end of his life.

But Constantine had early been separated from his parents. He had been detained—and for this reason among others Constantius Chlorus may have been disposed to show some regard to the will of the Emperor—at the Court of Diocletian in Nicomedia as a hostage for the fidelity of his father, and here he was a witness of the persecution. He beheld the cruelty of the heathen and the firmness of the martyrs. Such scenes, it cannot be doubted, made a deep impression upon him, but whether he regarded them chiefly from a religious or from a political point of view, is a question about which authors continue, and probably will continue for centuries, to dispute. It is not, however, one of the highest importance. The testimony to Christianity borne by the great revolution of the fourth century is not in the least degree weakened by the admission—if we were to make it—that the first Emperor that professed this religion did so merely on public grounds and without deep personal conviction of its truth. What was it that, even as a politician, he learned from the utter failure of the ruthless measures which were taken to extinguish the faith of Jesus, but just this, that here was a power stronger than man, and that no one who knew his time and the increasing purpose of the centuries, which had made his time what it was, should venture to oppose or to despise a might which had proved itself superior to that of the wisest and greatest Emperors of the past? Already the Church had shown itself to be "the anvil which breaks all hammers." It is giving Constantine the credit for no remarkable degree of political insight to say that he began to discern at Nicomedia, and subsequently discerned more fully, that the Christian religion was the one true and fruitful faith among defunct and dying superstitions. The growing society of believers might by no means as yet embrace half the soldiers of the Empire, but its compact organisation, its spirit of love and union, the invincible devotion of its members, had so presented themselves to the mind of Diocletian that, in spite of his convictions, he held back his hand for nearly twenty

years. They impressed Constantine more, not merely because his opinions and feelings were less hostile, but because Diocletian had entirely failed when he undertook the work of extermination. For fifty years the Christians had never felt themselves so weak as that winter during which the rulers took counsel together against them, and against Him who identifies Himself with His followers; but when the outburst came, what derision was poured upon the result! Out of weakness the Church came forth in strength and, we may say, in majesty. "This is the Lord's doing." Whether Constantine was a true Christian or a hypocrite, or an eclectic, his relation to the faith cannot be regarded as a question of more than subordinate importance. But, says Baur, who goes so far as to maintain that Constantine's religious convictions are of no consequence for history, "This also must be held for religiosity when one recognises that which in the course of historical development has become a manifest objective reality, sees in it a divine witness, and bends before it as a higher power in the consciousness of his subjective dependence."[1] Possibly the argument from success would have had the same weight with Constantine whatever the means by which it had been achieved. I need hardly say that a man who has more than that kind of religiosity concerns himself mainly with the moral and spiritual force by which Christianity gained the ascendency in the world.

But I return to the narrative, only remarking that the impressions which Constantine received at this time needed to be afterwards confirmed and strengthened. It would seem that, during his stay in the east, he won military renown in many a battle, and that he was sometimes exposed to danger —put in the forefront—by Galerius, who wished him out of the way. Constantine, however, made his escape from Nicomedia and joined his father at Boulogne when he was on the point of crossing to Britain. On the 25th of July, 306 A.D., Constantius Chlorus died at York, and the same day Constantine was proclaimed Emperor by the army. Constantine, son of Constantius—this was the only dynasty founded by any of the sovereigns of that age, and it was shortlived, expiring in Julian the Apostate (361 A.D.).

[1] [*Kirchengesch.*, 1ter Band. § 466.]

At the time he succeeded his father, and for some years afterwards, Constantine, whatever might be his prepossessions in favour of Christianity, and his conviction of the folly of persecuting it, was still outwardly a pagan, and it is quite credible that his external acts of devotion were prompted by a sincere attachment to the ancient religion. Among the wars in which he engaged successfully shortly after his accession, was one against the Franks, who had broken the peace during his father's absence in Britain; and it is recorded of him that, when hostilities were terminated, he evinced his gratitude by presenting a costly offering to Apollo in one of his temples.[1] His decided preference for Christianity was not shown till a later time, and is commonly connected with his victory over Maxentius, or rather with the miracle by which that victory was preceded. Maxentius, the son of Maximian, the colleague of Diocletian, had been passed over in the choice of Cæsars. Resolving to seize by force the power which he believed himself entitled to claim, he established himself in Italy with the help of the prætorians. Severus, one of the Augusti, was taken at Ravenna and murdered (307 A.D.). But Maxentius, when rid of his rival, quarrelled with his father, and the latter, to protect himself, sought an alliance with Constantine, recognising him as justly invested with the dignity of Augustus, and giving him his daughter Fausta in marriage. But Maximian did not obtain the help he desired, and afterwards, having been guilty of plotting for the overthrow of his son-in-law, he was taken prisoner at Marseilles, was permitted to live for some time at the court, but at last, being convicted of intriguing afresh, and of even meditating assassination, he found no mercy beyond the permission to choose by what death he would die. He chose hanging, and he hanged himself. His own daughter had borne witness against him.

Meanwhile the flagitious life and tyrannical rule of Maxentius had become intolerable to his Italian subjects, who loudly called for an avenger and deliverer.[2] Constantine was not deaf to their cry. He crossed the Alps to rid the inhabit-

[1] This temple is supposed to have been at Augustodunum (Autun).

[2] According to Christian writers. But was it before any of Constantine's victories were won?

ants of Italy of a tyrant whose name was now hateful to heathen and Christians alike.

It was when Constantine was on this expedition that there is said to have occurred the extraordinary event which has been regarded by many as the turning-point in the religious history of the Emperor, and one of the most notable turning-points in the religious history of the world. What happened in the course of his advance against Maxentius, according to Eusebius, led Constantine to worship henceforth only the one true and living God. The substance of the early historian's narrative is thus given by Neander:—

"Maxentius, in making his preparations for the war, had scrupulously observed all the customary ceremonies of paganism, and was relying for success on the agency of supernatural powers. Hence Constantine was the more strongly persuaded that he ought not to place his whole confidence in an arm of flesh. He revolved in his mind to what god it would be suitable for him to apply for aid. The misfortunes of the last Emperors, who had been so zealously devoted to the cause of paganism, and the example of his father, who had trusted in the one true and Almighty God alone, admonished him that he also should place confidence in no other. To this God, therefore, he applied, praying that He would reveal Himself to him, and lend him the protection of His arm in the approaching contest. While thus praying, a short time after noon (*ἀμφὶ μεσημβρινὰς ὥρας, ἤδη τῆς ἡμέρας ἀποκτινούσης*), he beheld, spread on the face of the heavens, a glittering cross, and above it the inscription, 'By this conquer' (*τούτῳ νίκα—Hoc vince*).

"The Emperor and his whole army, now just about to commence their march towards Italy, were seized with awe. While Constantine was still pondering the import of this sign, night came on; and in a dream Christ appeared to him, with the same symbol as he had seen in the heavens, and directed him to cause a banner to be prepared after the same pattern, and to use it as his protection against the power of the enemy. The Emperor obeyed; he caused to be made, after the pattern he had seen, the resplendent banner of the cross (called the Labarum),[1] on the shaft of which was affixed

[1] The Labarum—the word is derived from a barbarian root—as described by

with the symbol of the cross, the monogram of the name of Christ. He then sent for Christian teachers, of whom he inquired concerning the God that had appeared to him, and the import of the symbol. This gave them an opportunity of instructing him in the knowledge of Christianity." [1]

Even in books of Church history published within these few years, you will sometimes find it stated, without the slightest hint that the statement is at all open to criticism, that Constantine and his army beheld a luminous appearance in heaven, quite plainly representing a cross with an inscription which was quite plainly legible. The narrative of this miracle, however, has little claim to credibility. The evidence on which it rests reduces itself to the testimony of the Emperor himself, given at an advanced period of life, and communicated to us probably with embellishments, and exaggerated by his aged panegyrist. Lactantius, in his work *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, written in 314 A.D., speaks only of a dream which Constantine had, and in which he was directed to cause the heavenly sign to be delineated on the shields of the soldiers, and so to proceed to battle.[2] Eusebius himself, in his *Ecclesiastical History*, written at an earlier period (324 A.D.) than his *Life of Constantine*, does not, in his account of the struggle with Maxentius, record the miracle, which, according to the declaration afterwards made by the Emperor, the whole army had witnessed with astonishment and awe. How did it happen that so singular and glorious an event, beheld by thousands of spectators, remained so long a secret to Eusebius? Further, Constantine was neither so entirely ignorant of the Christian religion before, nor so decided a Christian after the conflict with Maxentius, as he is represented in the account of the famous appearance. The son of Constantius Chlorus must have had greater knowledge of the God of the Christians and of the cross than he appears here

Eusebius, consisted of a long spear overlaid with gold and a cross piece of wood, from which hung a square flag of purple cloth, embroidered, and covered with precious stones. On the top of the shaft was a crown composed of gold and precious stones, and containing the monogram of Christ, and just under this crown was a likeness in gold of the Emperor and his sons.

[1] Neander's *Church History*, iii. p. 10.

[2] Sozomen, in the fifth century, speaks of a divine and angelic whisper. Yet he was acquainted with the narrative of Eusebius.

to possess. And if it is certain that at this time his regard for Christianity became higher, we know that subsequently he took part in heathen ceremonies, and honoured heathen divinities. Such a change as took place on the road to Damascus by no means took place now on the way to Rome. If, in the case of Constantine, conversion in the deep spiritual sense ever took place at all, it was by no means a sudden revolution, but the end of a long period of syncretism, like that of Alexander Severus, or Philip the Arabian, or his own father, Constantius Chlorus. This syncretism, indeed, is not concealed in the narrative that contains the miracle, but there it appears only as preceding it, for we are told that then the Emperor was brought to the determination to worship no other God than Him who had revealed Himself to him.

But what, after all, was that extraordinary sign, as it was understood both by Constantine and by the biographer whose admiration of his hero had grown with his years? I have seen it characterised as a sort of monotheistic fetich, which had inherent virtue to break the power of the enemy and to counteract all charms and divine or demoniacal assistance in which the enemy might trust. There is good ground for this representation of the matter in the language of Eusebius himself, and it is unnecessary to say that additional discredit is thus put upon a story which comes to us supported by evidence so extremely scanty. The truth seems to be that the Christians of that age, devoutly recognising, as well they might recognise, the arm of the Lord in the great deliverance wrought for them by Constantine as the main instrument, were superstitious enough to accept, or rather to crave for, the story of a special miraculous interposition as necessary to account for the glorious change; and possibly, if we are not to suppose a deliberate falsehood confirmed by an oath, the Emperor in advanced life confounded a vivid dream with the recollections of his waking hours. At all events, he was not unwilling that his head should be surrounded with a halo of mythical glory.

But some, giving up the miracle, regard the account of Eusebius as a passage of the internal spiritual history of Constantine, who, in the critical days of the struggle against Maxentius, proposed to himself the question in what relation

he should place himself to the powerful party of the Christians and to their God, and, looking up in an excited frame, beheld in a luminous cloud the appearance of a cross with that inscription, and so felt himself attracted to Christianity. Whether there be anything in this explanation or not, as accounting for the origin of the story, it remains incontestable that the biographer would have us accept the miracle in its objective reality. The whole army witnessed it along with their commander.

This, however, is certain, that Constantine advanced against Maxentius and conquered. His rival, flying wildly from the battle, which was fought at Saxa Rubra, a short distance from Rome, plunged from the Milvian bridge, or was driven headlong from it by the pressing multitudes behind, into the Tiber, and perished in its waters (28th Oct., 312 A.D.). If Constantine ascribed a magical virtue to the visible cross, we shall not use strong language of his superstition if we compare it with the "mummery of magic" to which, according to Eusebius, the monstrous tyrant over whom he triumphed had resorted before the war. He is described as "at one time cutting open pregnant females, at another time examining the bowels of new-born babies, sometimes also slaughtering lions and performing any kind of execrable acts, to invoke the demons, and to avert the impending war."[1] Such were the means employed to secure victory by the foul, rapacious, cruel, and drunken oppressor who was drowned in the Tiber.

Constantine showed his gratitude, and commemorated his victory, by erecting in the forum his own statue, which represented him holding in his right hand a standard in the shape of a cross with the inscription: "By this salutary sign, the true symbol of valour, I have freed your city from the yoke of the tyrant."[2] On the other hand, the triumphal arch erected by the Roman senate and people is said to have originally borne the letters J. O. M. (Jovis Optimi Maximi).[3]

[1] [*De Vita Const.*, i. 36.]

[2] Τούτῳ τῷ σωτηριώδει σημείῳ, τῷ ἀληθινῷ ἐλέγχῳ τῆς ἀνδρίας, τὴν πόλιν ὑμῶν ἀπὸ ζυγοῦ τοῦ τυράννου διασωθεῖσαν ἐλευθέρωσα—Eus. ix. 9.

[3] The arch was erected three years after the battle was fought. It was of marble.

These were the original letters: *numini divinitatis* had been written over them.

Constantine took no offence at the ascription of his success to the pagan divinity. Indeed, he retained the title *pontifex maximus*.[1]

But great light is thrown on the time and on the character of Constantine by the edicts of toleration which were published before and after the triumph over Maxentius. We may imagine the joy that pervaded the Churches, scattered for eight long years, and certainly, though the persecution did not rage with equal severity and with equal constancy in all parts of the Empire, suffering in many of its members during that period. We may imagine their joy when peace was at length (311 A.D.) restored by the first edict of toleration that, with the exception of that issued by Gallienus, appeared since Christianity was founded. Not the least remarkable circumstance connected with this edict, in the promulgation of which the mighty hand of Him with whom a thousand years are as one day was devoutly owned, is that the man whose name is chiefly associated with it was no other than the man who had been the soul of the persecution, and had been most violent in carrying into execution the bloody resolutions of Diocletian, to which, too, he had been the chief instigator. Galerius was at length overcome by the energy of conviction and the capacity of endurance which the Christians displayed, and, though he may not himself have embraced the truth, he no doubt regretted the folly and cruelty of the past the more deeply that he was now stretched on a bed of sickness, on which he was soon to expire. In conjunction with Constantine and Licinius, he issued the edict of toleration from Nicomedia, the city from which the edicts of persecution had also proceeded. Its date is the 30th of April, 311 A.D. Both Eusebius and Lactantius represent this celebrated decree as the fruit of the dying Emperor's remorse. Both of them, after giving an appalling description of his lingering disease, under which he endured intolerable anguish—after telling of the innumerable swarms of minute worms which preyed upon him, and of the ghastly looking skin, which set itself deep among the bones, and of the foul stench which spread far beyond the palace, and which few of the famous physicians,

[1] The title appears on coins and inscriptions of a date later even than that of the Council of Nicæa (325).

brought from all quarters, were able to endure—proceed to tell of the compunctions which he was brought to feel by so great misery, and the resolution he took to make amends for his wickedness. "At length," says Lactantius, "overcome by calamities, he was obliged to acknowledge God, and he cried aloud, in the intervals of raging pain, that he would re-edify the Church which he had demolished, and make atonement for his misdeeds." [1] "And when he was near his end, he published an edict of the tenor following [2]: "Amongst our other regulations for the permanent advantage of the commonweal, we have hitherto studied to reduce all things to a conformity with the ancient laws and public discipline of the Romans. It has been our aim in an especial manner that the Christians also, who had abandoned the religion of their forefathers, should return to right opinions. For such wilfulness and folly had, we know not how, taken possession of them that, instead of observing those ancient institutions which possibly their own forefathers had established, they, through caprice, made laws to themselves, and drew together into different societies many men of widely different persuasions. After the publication of our edict, ordaining the Christians to betake themselves to the observance of the ancient institutions, many of them were subdued through fear of danger, and moreover many of them were exposed to jeopardy; nevertheless, because great numbers still persist in their opinions, and because we have perceived that at present they neither pay reverence and due adoration to the gods, nor yet worship their own God, therefore we, from our wonted clemency in bestowing pardon upon all, have judged it fit to extend our indulgence to those men, and to permit them again to be Christians, and to establish the places of their religious assemblies; yet so as that they offend not against good order. By another mandate we purpose to signify unto magistrates how they ought herein to demean themselves. Wherefore it will be the duty of Christians, in consequence of this our toleration, to pray to their God for our welfare, and for that of the public, and for their own; that the commonweal may continue safe in every

[1] *De Mortibus Persecutorum*. ch. xxxiii.

[2] *Ibid.* ch. xxxiv. Eusebius gives the names of the three Emperors, beginning with Galerius.

quarter, and that they themselves may live securely in their habitations."

It is to be remarked with regard to this edict:

1. That, while it contains no admission of the injustice of the persecutions, it openly acknowledges their failure. While it refers to cases—and there were such—of cowardice and defection, it bears the plainest testimony to the stedfastness of the great mass.

2. It somewhat obscurely indicates that what might seem a partial success—the destruction, namely, of the Christian churches and discontinuance of Christian worship in many quarters—was in reality no gain to polytheism or to the Empire. This appears to be the meaning involved in the words "because great numbers still persist in their opinions, and because we have perceived that at present they neither pay reverence and due adoration to the gods, nor yet worship their own God." It was no real advantage to prevent those men from exercising their own religion if they were not converted to the religion of the State.

There are other passages in the edict a satisfactory explanation of which I have nowhere seen, and am unable to give. Baur's idea of the edict, founded on those more perplexing passages, is striking, and is abundantly supported. It is that the three Emperors set themselves in contradiction with history and represent the sanguinary measures of the past years as directed, not against the Christians in general, but against the founders of sects among them, and those by whom these founders were followed—against those who were guilty of the old crime for which Socrates suffered—the νεωτερίζειν in religion — the innovating upon the *instituta veterum*. Among the *instituta veterum* Christianity is now classed. It has withstood all attempts to crush it, and has accordingly become a *religio licita*. This view of Baur's seems to be supported by some clauses, but it has its own difficulties. Clemency, for instance, the edict says, is extended to all Christians, sects of the most recent order not excepted. Obscurity in the document, however, was inevitable, because its authors, while announcing a complete change of policy, were solicitous to show that they had never been in the wrong, but had been amply justified in persecuting a religion

which now, for wiser reasons, they resolved to tolerate. I speak of the authors of the document collectively. Constantine, of course, had not such a personal interest as Galerius and Licinius in vindicating or palliating the past.

3. We have here a conspicuous example of the syncretism which was so common in that age of transition, and which, as we have seen, characterised Constantius Chlorus, and which some believe to have characterised Constantine himself, not only at this period, but through his whole life. Constantine, as has already been indicated, is sometimes represented as standing to the end with one foot in the old, and the other in the new, world. The Emperors desire the concurrent supplication of all their subjects, by whatever names the gods or the god to whom they cry may be called. Peradventure the God of the Christians could render some help to the Empire; while, on the other hand, it was apparent that the imperial sword would soon be blunted and broken if it continued unsheathed against His worshippers. He might not be the one true God, but it was not safe to despise Him; it was wise to invoke the assistance of a god whose votaries had displayed such energy and put forth an influence that percolated all grades of society. And so we have this surprising turn, that the three sovereigns ask the prayers of those who had long been denounced as the enemies, not only of the gods, but of the human race, and as the authors of all the great calamities with which the world had been visited for three hundred years. That the God of the Christians should be ranked among the recognised divinities was indeed far from being an honour meet for Him, but it was at least a tacit acknowledgment of the utter impotence of those who had aimed at the extinction of the Christian name.

4. In this edict religious freedom is not conceded as a right. It is proclaimed as an act of clemency on the part of rulers who believe themselves entitled to punish, but who had discovered that punishment was vain.

Neither the name of Maximin, whose relations with the other sovereigns were by no means friendly, nor that of Maxentius, who, indeed, was regarded as a usurper, appears

at the head of the remarkable document which we have had before us. Maximin, however, felt himself constrained to follow the precedent set by Galerius, Constantine, and Licinius, and issued an edict of toleration in his own name. It agreed substantially with the edict of the three.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE CHRISTIANS AND THE ROMAN POWER—CONSTANTINE AND LICINIUS.

After the termination of the war with Maxentius, who had himself perished in battle, Constantine met with Licinius at Milan. Licinius, bent on overthrowing Maximin in the east as Maxentius had been overthrown in the west, was anxious to stand in close alliance with his triumphant colleague, and married Constantia, Constantine's sister.

The two rulers now issued in common a second edict (whether we should not say a third will be considered afterwards), which bears the name of the city where they had conferred. It was published on the 30th of March, 313 A.D. On the 13th of June, according to Lactantius, Licinius, who had made his entry into Nicomedia, ordered its promulgation from that city. Though the document is of some length, we have it, according to Neander, only in an abridged form. I shall transcribe it as we have it in the *De Mortibus Persecutorum* (ch. xlviii.):—

"When we, Constantine and Licinius, Emperors, had an interview at Milan, and conferred together with respect to the good and security of the commonweal, it seemed to us that, among those things that are profitable to mankind in general, the reverence paid to the Divinity merited our first and chief attention, and that it was proper that the Christians and all others should have liberty to follow that mode of religion which to each of them appeared best; so that all that is Divine in heaven might be benign and propitious to us, and to every one under our government; and therefore we judged it a salutary measure, and one highly consonant with sound reason, that no man should be denied leave of attaching himself to the Christians, or to whatever other religion his mind directed him to, that thus the supreme

Divinity, to whose worship we freely devote ourselves, might continue to vouchsafe His favour and beneficence to us. And accordingly we give you to know that, without regard to any provisos in our former orders to you concerning the Christians, all who choose that religion are to be permitted, freely and absolutely, to remain in it, and not to be disturbed any ways, or molested. And we thought fit to be thus special in the things committed to your charge, that you might understand that the indulgence which we have granted in matters of religion to the Christians is ample and unconditional, and perceive at the same time that the open and free exercise of their respective religions is granted to all others, as well as to the Christians; for it befits the well-ordered State and the tranquillity of our times that each individual be allowed, according to his own choice, to worship the Divinity, and we mean not to derogate aught from the honour due to any religion and its votaries. Moreover, with respect to the Christians, we formerly gave certain orders concerning the places appropriated for their religious assemblies; but now we wish that all persons who have purchased such places, either from our exchequer, or from any one else, do restore them to the Christians without money demanded or price claimed, and that this be performed peremptorily and unambiguously; and we will also that they who have obtained any right to such places by form of gift do forthwith restore them to the Christians; reserving always to such persons who have either purchased for a price or gratuitously acquired them, to make application to the judge of the district, if they look on themselves as entitled to any equivalent from our beneficence. All these places are, by your intervention,[1] to be immediately restored to the Christians. And because it appears that, besides the places appropriated to religious worship, the Christians did possess other places, which belonged, not to individuals, but to their society in general, that is, to their churches, we comprehend all such within the regulation aforesaid, and we will that you cause them all to be restored to the society or churches, and that without hesitation or controversy; provided always that the persons making restitution without a price paid shall

[1] Addressed to the governor of the province.

be at liberty to seek indemnification from our bounty. In furthering all which things for the behoof of the Christians, you are to use your utmost diligence, to the end that our orders be speedily obeyed, and our gracious purpose in securing the public tranquillity promoted. So shall that Divine favour which, in affairs of the mightiest importance, we have already experienced, continue to give success to us, and in our success make the commonweal happy. And that the tenor of this our gracious ordinance may be made known to all, we will that you cause it by your authority to be published everywhere."

There is little to indicate that the edict, as thus preserved by Lactantius, is given in an abbreviated form, but the introduction is omitted. It is supplied from Eusebius, and runs as follows :—

"As we long since perceived that religious liberty should not be denied, but that it should be granted to the opinion and wishes of each one to perform divine duties according to his own determination, we had given orders that each one, the Christians among the rest,[1] have the liberty to observe the religion of his choice, and his peculiar mode of worship. But as many and various conditions were expressely added in the edict which gave them this liberty, probably (ἴσως) some may have been deterred from the free exercise of their religion. Wherefore," etc., the rest being substantially as in Lactantius.

This introduction has led the great majority of historians to the conclusion that an edict now lost was issued between 311 A.D. and 313 A.D., and that this lost edict contained the conditions which had a deterrent effect on so many. Baur, for example, feels himself constrained to adopt the opinion that, after the public toleration and recognition of Christianity by the edict of the year 311 A.D., very many who had participated in pagan rites against their inward convictions were encouraged to make an open profession of the religion to which, from fear of persecution, they had proved false, and that, alarmed by these accessions, the two sovereigns (Constantine and Licinius) interposed with a restraining measure, this being the lost edict, which is supposed to have been

[1] ἵκαστον κικειλιύκιμεν, τοῖς τε Χριστιανοῖς [*Ecc. Hist.* x. 5].

issued in 312 A.D.; and further, that, as the edict of Milan followed so soon after, removing the grievous conditions that had been imposed, great dissatisfaction and ferment must have been caused in the Christian population, particularly in the west, and must have been so loudly expressed as to compel the Emperors to grant full religious freedom. On any supposition, we may believe that, before 313 A.D., the adoption of Christianity by those who had formerly been pagans was rendered difficult or impossible, and, further, that certain obstacles were thrown in the way of Christians when they sought to recover their lost property. This, I say, we may believe in any case. But it is not absolutely necessary to have recourse to the conjecture of a second edict—an edict of 312 A.D.—which has been lost, and of which no trace has anywhere been found. It is quite possible that the restrictions which were found to be oppressive, and which were removed by the edict of Milan, were contained in the particular instructions given along with the edict of 311 A.D. to the governors of provinces. "By another mandate," it is said towards the end of that edict, "we purpose to signify unto magistrates how they ought herein to demean themselves." The grievous conditions may have been contained in those instructions. But, wherever they were found, they were now entirely removed.

1. With regard to the edict of 313 A.D., it is to be noticed that it contains phrases that have by no means a Christian sound. The Emperors, by granting liberty to the votaries of all religions, seek to conciliate "whatever is divine in the celestial seat" — *quidquid divinitatis in sede cœlesti*, is Neander's reading, instead of *quod quidem divinitus in sede cœlesti*. This eclecticism is subsequent to the appearance of that luminous cross.

2. The principle of universal religious liberty is expressed in a manner the most unconditional. "The open and free exercise of their respective religions"—such are the terms of the edict—"is granted to all others as well as to the Christians; for it befits the well-ordered State and the tranquillity of our times that each individual be allowed, according to his own choice, to worship the Divinity, and we mean not to derogate ought from the honour due to any

religion or its votaries." We may take exception to the last expression, but here we behold the Emperors on a height confessedly new to history—a height, however, on which, according to some, it is impossible for any government to maintain itself with perfect strictness in practice, and on which, assuredly, Constantine did not maintain himself. In his reign, and with a rapidity that, when we think of the long centuries of struggle and comparative obscurity through which the Church had been preserved, seems marvellous, favours and privileges succeeded equality. It is no wonder that the father of ecclesiastical history, when speaking of the revolution which took place shortly after the publication of the edict of Milan, rises from his often dry style to the lyrical. It was the time for a new song when the old churches were restored, and others built and dedicated. The Christians had learned from their holy books of the wonderful ways of God, not only in saving and feeding and blessing His inheritance, but in lifting it up. "O God, we have heard with our ears, our fathers have told us, the works that Thou didst in their days, the days of old." Now they could say: "As we have heard, so have we seen, in the city of the Lord of Hosts, in the city of our God." Then would each one cry aloud and sing: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go unto the house of the Lord." "I will praise the Lord with my whole heart in the assembly of the upright, in the congregation." "He hath showed His people the power of His works, that He may give them the heritage of the heathen." "He sent redemption unto His folk; He hath commanded His covenant for ever; holy and reverend is His name." Such passages as these might well have been used, and devoutly used, had Constantine contented himself with granting religious freedom to the Christians in common with the rest of his subjects, and we cannot doubt that they were frequently heard from earnest lips before the period when the Church enjoyed decided imperial preference and favour.[1]

Before the will of Constantine and Licinius could take effect, it was necessary that Maximin should be removed.

[1] The prominence given to the Christians in the edict is not inconsistent with the principle of universal religious liberty. They alone had been persecuted and spoiled.

He, as we have seen, had for a time acted in conformity, or, according to Eusebius, pretended to act in conformity, with the toleration edict of 311 A.D., but soon again he rekindled persecution. His object, as given by the historian, was to win the heathen population; but, "after being defeated by Licinius against whom he undertook an execrable war," he slew the friends and prophets of the old gods as jugglers and impostors, and, giving glory to the God of the Christians, he immediately enacted a full and final decree for their liberty. But it was too late. Soon afterwards he was seized with a violent disease and died. It was after his fall (13th June, 313 A.D.) that the edict of Milan was published at Nicomedia by the triumphant Licinius.

In the year in which the memorable edict appeared, Diocletian died, aged sixty-eight, at his villa in the neighbourhood of Salona, to which he had returned upon his abdication in 305 A.D. He is said to have taken his own life by hunger or by poison. His last days had been embittered by the cruel treatment to which his wife Prisca and his daughter Valeria had been subjected by Maximin. Lactantius mentions, along with this affliction and in immediate connection with the account of his death, an affront put upon him by Constantine. By his command, he informs us, the statues of Maximian Herculius were thrown down, and his portraits removed, and, as the two old Emperors were generally delineated in one piece, the portraits of both were removed at the same time. Thus Diocletian lived to see a disgrace such as no former emperor had ever seen, and, under the double load of vexation of spirit and bodily maladies, he resolved to die. Tossing to and fro, with his soul agitated by grief, he could neither eat nor take rest. He sighed, groaned, and wept often, and incessantly threw himself into various positions, now on his couch, and now on the ground. So he who for twenty years was the most prosperous of emperors, having been cast down into the obscurity of a private station, treated in the most contumelious manner, and compelled to abhor life, became incapable of receiving nourishment, and, worn out with anguish of mind, expired.[1]

[1] *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, ch. xlii.

Certainly it does not appear very distinctly from this account that Diocletian actually took his own life; and, though the report is elsewhere mentioned, we can hardly wonder that Gibbon casts doubt upon it. One cannot but wonder, however, at the language in which the eminent historian gives what seems to him the probable explanation of its origin. "As Diocletian," he says, "had disobliged a powerful and successful party, his memory has been loaded with every crime and misfortune." It is not denied, however, that he passed his last days in sadness, though the period of his retirement is described as on the whole one of contentment and innocent enjoyment. The celebrated answer which he gave on one occasion to Maximian is adduced as a proof. "He was solicited by that restless old man to reassume the reins of government, and the imperial purple. He rejected the temptation with a smile of pity, calmly observing, that if he could show Maximian the cabbages which he had planted with his own hands at Salona, he should no longer be urged to relinquish the enjoyment of happiness for the pursuit of power."[1]

We have no interest in depreciating the constancy with which Diocletian adhered to his resolution, or the spirit in which, during the greater period of his retirement, he adapted himself to his circumstances; but it is by no means surprising that power had lost its attractions for him. He was endowed with great qualities, but his policy had proved a failure—particularly, as has been said again and again, his religious policy, which had aimed at the consolidation of the Empire by the extinction of the Christian name. The revolution which had taken place during the ten years that had elapsed between the commencement of the last persecution and the promulgation of the edict of Milan I have seen somewhere represented as not less remarkable than that which had taken place during the three centuries that preceded. This is scarcely a just way of regarding the progress of events. We might as well speak of the decisive battle that terminates a long war as accomplishing greater results than all the preparations and previous struggles, without which it would never have been fought. But certainly the revolution of those few years must have appeared to the aged Emperor the most rapid

[1] *Decline and Fall*, ch. xiii.

and amazing the world had ever known. And to him, as has been acknowledged by writers who are as little disposed as Gibbon to see the special judgment of heaven in the "death of the persecutors," it must have been so humiliating that, if it did not drive him to self-murder, it at least hastened and embittered his end.

Since Diocletian's abdication, Severus, Maximian, Maxentius, and Maximin had been successively overthrown, and had perished. Galerius, too, had died, though he had been to the end in possession of power. And now there remained only Constantine and his brother-in-law, Licinius, the former supreme in the west, the latter in the east. But in the year immediately following (314 A.D.), war broke out between them. Licinius was unsuccessful, and was obliged to cede Illyricum (except Thrace) to the victor. This European territory was an instalment, if not of what was due, yet of what Constantine in all probability had already resolved to exact. Till the day of final reckoning came, the mutual alienation and aversion of the two Emperors naturally increased; and, according to Eusebius, the tyrant in the east, regarding all the friends of Constantine as his enemies, began a new persecution of the Christians. There was probably some ground for his suspicions that the Christians did not pray for him as they did for Constantine; and assuredly the Christians knew well to whom they were most indebted, and from whom they had most to hope. They knew well which of the two was the real author of the late edict, bearing the name of both, by which they were raised to equality with the other subjects of the Empire. And the sovereign on whom they placed their confidence came to their help when Licinius was mad enough to return to the policy of persecution, which of late had proved so disastrous to all who adopted it.

In this final war, whatever the motives that led to it, Licinius, having been conquered by land and by sea, laid down the purple at the feet of his colleague, and soon afterwards he was put to death at Thessalonica—in violation, it is generally said, of a promise, confirmed by an oath, obtained by Constantia, that he "should be permitted to spend the remainder of his days in peace and affluence."[1] The crowning victory

[1] Gibbon.

of Constantine, gained when Licinius fell, and Byzantium opened its gates, and the whole Roman Empire was again united under one head, is the subject of the last chapter of the *Ecclesiastical History* of Eusebius. The writer says nothing of the death of Licinius, which, as Gibbon observes in a note, is suspicious, but describes the nefarious tyrant as prostrate at the conqueror's feet. And then he goes on to speak of the mighty victor as extending, after all his impious foes had been hurled to destruction, his peaceful rule "from the rising of the sun even to the last borders of the declining day. All things were filled with light, and all who before were sunk in sorrow beheld one another with smiling and cheerful faces. With choirs and hymns, in the cities and villages, they celebrated and extolled first of all God, the universal King, because they thus were taught; then they also celebrated the praises of the pious Emperor, and with him all his divinely-favoured children. Edicts full of clemency were published, and laws were enacted indicative of munificence and genuine religion." And so here again, as at the date of his victory over Maxentius, we have an important religious epoch. Special marks of favour had indeed been conferred on the Church during the intervening years, but now the preference is avowed and decided. In an edict intended for the eastern provinces, which appeared immediately after the conquest of Licinius, the God of the Christians is plainly recognised as the true God, whose power had been displayed and magnified by recent events, and to whom worship should be rendered throughout the Empire. In this edict, as was just, and by no means inconsistent with the principles avowed in 313 A.D., it was required that restoration of property lost through persecution should be made, not only to churches, but to individuals—to such, for example, as had been banished to desolate islands, or had been condemned to imprisonment in the mines. If the sufferers no longer survived, their heirs should receive the compensation due to them, and, if there were no natural heirs, the churches to which they had belonged. In addressing the eastern provinces, Constantine introduces a prayer, which is thus rendered by Neander:—

"Thee, the supreme God, I invoke; be gracious to all Thy citizens of the Eastern Provinces, who have been worn down

by long-continued distress, bestowing on them, through me, Thy servant, salvation. And well may I ask this of Thee, Lord of the universe, holy God; for by the leading of Thy hand have I undertaken and accomplished salutary things. Everywhere preceded by Thy sign (*τὴν σὴν σφραγῖδα παντα χοῦ προβαλλόμενος*), have I led on a victorious army. And if anywhere the public affairs demand it, I go against the enemy, following the same symbol of Thy power. For this reason I have consecrated to Thee my soul, deeply imbued with love and with fear; for I sincerely love Thy name, I venerate Thy power, which thou hast revealed to me by so many proofs, and by which thou hast confirmed my faith."[1]

In the same document, however, though Christianity is recognised as the true religion, persecuting principles are emphatically disclaimed. "Let those," it is said, "who remain strangers to God's holy laws, retain, since they wish it, the temples of falsehood. . . We could wish that they too might share with us the joy of a common harmony. Yet let no one trouble his neighbour by that which is his own conviction. With the knowledge he has gained let him, if possible, profit his neighbour. If it is not possible, he should allow his neighbour to go on in his own way. For it is one thing to enter voluntarily into the contest for eternal life, and another to force one to it against his will."

It would be unfair to reckon among violation of these principles of toleration the destruction of temples that were the theatres of gross licentiousness, as that of Aphrodite, at Aphaka, in Phœnicia, or that at Hierapolis, in the same country. We may even hesitate to apply the term persecution to the demolition of temples that, like the temple of Æsculapius at Ægae, in Cilicia, had been maintained in splendour by fraudulent priests, who pretended to work miraculous cures; but, as these structures, and indeed the building first mentioned also, offered rich spoils for the embellishment of the new capital, it may well be supposed that the Emperor's desire to suppress immorality and knavery was not the only motive by which he was influenced. On the other hand, numerous churches were built by him—at Rome (where the building was erected over the "graves" of the

[1] [*Ch. Hist.*, vol. iii. p. 30.]

Apostles Peter and Paul), and in Constantinople, Nicomedia, Antioch, and the Holy Land.[1]

The munificent support of the Christians was not, of course, violent persecution of the pagan religion, but we are expressly informed that heathen sacrifices were interdicted to officers of state, who, moreover, were required to observe the first day of the week. Some authorities are inclined to believe that, before the end of Constantine's reign, the prohibition of sacrifices became general; but this opinion rests on no direct proof. On the contrary, it may almost be set down as certain that during his life the Christian religion, though protected and favoured, never became the exclusive religion of the State in the sense that all other religions were forbidden, or even that it alone was accorded recognition. In the new city which, as some writers have stated, Constantine was led by the inspiration of God Himself to choose as his capital, were erected two colossal statues, one representing the Emperor, and the other representing his mother. These statues held a cross, but in the midst of the cross appeared the image of Tyche (Fortune), which had been previously consecrated with heathen rites. Obviously, here was a striking figure of the time,—the cross conquering, but still with much to conquer,—and here was a still more striking picture of the man, for Constantine's own language shows that the cross would have had little glory in his eyes had he not seen in it something corresponding with the goodness of fortune, under whose protection, in fact, as well as under that of Christ, the imperial city was placed. It cannot be doubted, however, that, with all his lingering superstition, Constantine desired that the Christian religion should enjoy the pre-eminence, and that all his subjects should embrace it.

Further, Constantine not only extended to Christian ministers such immunities as had belonged to pagan priests, but made them large grants of money. The grants, however, it is important to observe, were made only to the clergy of the

[1] The Church of Tyre was dedicated in 313 A.D. It is said (by Fleury) to be the first of which we have any description. There were a surrounding wall; a square court, with fountains in the middle; three doors, the middle door, which was high and broad, leading into the nave, the other two leading into the aisles; and thrones, arranged in a semicircle, for priests and bishops. The address at the dedication was delivered by Eusebius.

Catholic Church. The very year in which the edict of Milan was issued (313 A.D.), he, in violation, not only of its spirit, but of its letter, addressed an epistle to Cæcilianus, Bishop of Carthage, in which he gave orders that a sum of money amounting to three thousand folles (the follis was equal to 208 denarii, or £7) should be distributed among certain ministers of the legitimate and most holy Catholic religion "in the provinces of Africa" (in the limited sense), "Numidia and Mauritania, and, at the same time, that measures should be taken for the punishment of heretics—those who by a certain pernicious adulteration sought to divert the people from the most holy Church." Instinctively the Emperor returned to the policy which so many of his most illustrious predecessors had adopted. It was his desire to unite all the inhabitants of the Roman world under one form of religious observance, and naturally the desire became more intense when they were all united under his sole sceptre. In spite of persecution, and partly in consequence of it, the organisation of the Church had become more firm and powerful and imposing, and offered a support for the throne such as Diocletian Jovius had sought in vain in the crumbling institutions of paganism. The great tree whose uttermost boughs Constantine had seen overshadowing the army in Britain when first he was proclaimed, and whose branches filled the provinces of Africa and Asia, as well as of Europe—this great tree, according to the conception he essentially formed of it, presented to him an outward visible unity; and the view which he might be led by conviction as well as by interest to embrace could more easily be followed up by effective measures, as it coincided with that of the great majority of his Christian subjects. It cannot be doubted that, though the unity of the Church was not recognised as centred in the see of Rome, though there, it might be said, some might see it symbolised and shadowed forth, the view of it that had been expressed about the middle of the previous century by Cyprian, was that generally entertained. "The Church," he had said, "is one. There are many branches, but one root; many rays, but one light. Whoever is secluded from the Church is joined to a harlot; he is severed from the promises of the Church; nor shall he who forsakes the Church of Christ partake of the rewards of Christ; he is a stranger,

an outcast, an enemy. He that doth not hold this unity doth not hold the law of God; he doth not keep the faith of the Father and the Son; he partaketh not of life or salvation."

Obviously this theory of Christian unity, which was widely prevalent, conduced to the promotion of the Emperor's views. At Hierapolis, in Phœnicia, where he had destroyed the temple of Venus, he founded a Church with presbyters and a bishop before there was a flock in the place. This must have cost money; but at the same time he made a large grant for distribution among the poor, expressing the hope that the conversion of their souls might be promoted by doing good to their bodies.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE DONATIST CONTROVERSY.

When Constantine interfered in the internal disputes of the Church, it was chiefly in the interest of that Catholic unity which he had so much at heart. This was the case, for example, with the Donatist controversy, of which I now give a brief account.

The general question involved in this controversy was the same as had been raised in the Novatian dispute, about the middle of the preceding century. It was this: whether men guilty of grievous sin, and particularly of declension in time of persecution, could be permitted, as priests, to dispense the holy sacraments, or even be tolerated as members in the Church. Nowhere had this question been agitated with greater keenness than at Carthage, where, indeed, the first dispute also had been raised. At the beginning of the fourth century there were here, and in the neighbouring African churches, two parties—a more moderate, and a more enthusiastic and severe. The former was headed by the bishop Mensurius and his archdeacon Cæcilianus, who, in the days when Diocletian's edicts were being carried into execution, had taken measures to restrain the zeal of those who courted the martyr's crown, or imprudently exposed themselves to the rage of the enemy, as, for instance, by visiting their captive brethren in the prisons. Mensurius regarded it as his duty to use every means for preserving life that could be employed without a direct denial of the faith, and he instructed his archdeacon to act in accordance with his views.

You will remember this peculiar feature of the Diocletian persecution: that it was directed, not only against the persons of Christians, but also, and indeed in the first instance, against their holy books. These, he decreed, must be delivered up. Hence arose the name for a new class of "lapsed" persons.

Those who complied with the imperial decree were called "Traditores." It is related of Mensurius that he ordered the removal from a church which was to be searched, of all copies of the Bible and the substitution for them of heretical writings, which the heathen, mistaking them for the books of which they were in quest, seized and destroyed. The statement, however, that heretical writings had been delivered up was represented by the strict party of the time as a mere pretence. If it were not, it equally exposed the bishop and Cæcilianus to the charge of falsehood.

Mensurius died in 311 A.D., and the friends of the archdeacon naturally desired what, in fact, was in accordance with custom—his elevation to the vacant see. The opposition, however, was most formidable. It was headed by a wealthy widow, Lucilla, who, it is said, had been reproved by Cæcilianus for her superstitious veneration of certain holy bones obtained from some quarter or another,—*pretended* relics, Roman Catholic writers say,—which she was in the habit of bringing to church with her, and kissing before she partook of the consecrated elements. I have seen it stated, but without the mention of any ancient authority, that she bribed the Numidian bishops; of whom Secundus, the primate, and Donatus, who was the best known of them, were declared opponents of the party of Cæcilianus. Secundus, indeed, had formerly reproached Mensurius for his lax principles, so that he at least did not need to be bribed when the vacancy took place. He could not be expected to favour the claims of one whose principles he reprobated.

But the combined opposition of the Numidian bishops, who sent their emissaries to the capital, and of the strict, or, as they are often called, the fanatical party, by whom the emissaries were welcomed, accelerated the election. The friends of Cæcilianus were apprehensive that, if they awaited the arrival of the Numidian bishops, their candidate would be rejected. Accordingly, they proceeded to the election, which, once made, would, they supposed, be considered valid; and a neighbouring bishop, Felix of Aptunga, performed the act of ordination. The Numidian bishops, however, who arrived soon after, with Secundus (of Tigisis) at their head, disputed, not the validity of the election, but that of the ordination;

they disputed, at least, not so much the validity of the election as that of the ordination. The ordination, they said, had been performed by a traditor.

Cæcilianus offered a compromise. He would resign if they gave the assurance that he would be ordained anew. The proposal involved a sacrifice of the Catholic doctrine, but it was unacceptable to the provincial bishops, who had probably gone too far with Lucilla and her friends, and who, even if they had not committed themselves, naturally desired that the See of Carthage should be filled by one of their own party. An "anagnostes" (ἀναγνώστης—"lector," "reader"), named Majorinus, who was favoured by Lucilla, was chosen counter bishop, and soon afterwards the bishops held an assembly, which excommunicated Cæcilianus and, some add, Felix, who had ordained him. Neander quotes, as characteristic of the party, the following language, used by one of its members at the assembly: "As unfruitful weeds are mown down and cast away, so the thurificati and traditores and those who are schismatically ordained by traditores, cannot remain in the Church of God, except they acknowledge their error and become reconciled with the Church by the tears of repentance.[1]

Both parties sought recognition from without. That of the country bishop, Majorinus, of which the soul was Donatus, Bishop of Casae Nigrae, had numerous adherents in Africa, but that of Cæcilianus obtained greater support in the other parts of the Christian world. For the settlement of the controversy, however, the civil power was invoked. The Donatists[2] set the fatal example of appealing in a purely ecclesiastical question to the Emperor, who, they hoped, would submit their cause to impartial judges.[3] Constantine, who was at this time resident in Gaul, directed the three bishops of Colonia Agrippina, Augustodunum (Autun), and Arelate (Arles), with whom Melchiades, or, as he is sometimes called, Miltiades, Bishop of Rome, was subsequently associated, to inquire into and settle the dispute between the two parties.

[1] From Augustine. Neander's *Church History*, iii. p. 267.

[2] [As the party of Majorinus came to be called.]

[3] They begged Constantine to give them judges from Gaul, which had been free from the crime [occasioned by a time] of persecution.

The commission thus formed, having met in October of 313 A.D., decided in favour of Cæcilianus, and pronounced the counter bishop Majorinus an intruder. The decision, as might be expected, was not recognised by the Donatists as a just one; it had been arrived at, they thought, without sufficient investigation, and, moreover, it was not entitled to great weight, as proceeding from a tribunal consisting of so small a number of members. The Emperor, being again appealed to, convened a synod at Arles in the following year. It was attended chiefly by the bishops of Italy and Gaul, but also by so many bishops from other quarters that, according to some, who would have special importance attached to its canons, it might justly be designated a western general synod. At least thirty-three bishops were present, and there were some priests who represented absent bishops. Britain, Spain, and Africa were represented, and two priests and two deacons (called "legates") came from Rome.[1]

At Arles, the decision pronounced by the commission of the previous year was confirmed. Among the canons established by this court that bear on the Donatist controversy,[2] the following are the most important:—

1. That only traditores convicted by public documents should lose their office.

2. (Can. 13). That the act of ordination, though performed by a traditor, was valid.

3. That baptism was valid if performed in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Those against whom the measures of the Council were in the first place directed were by no means disposed to acquiesce in them. Once more the Donatists appealed to Constantine, who heard the representatives of both parties at Milan, ratified the judgment twice pronounced by the voices of his

[1] The name of Marinus, Bishop of Arles, stands first of the thirty-three at the head of a letter addressed to Silvester, and containing the canons.

[2] This council established twenty canons in all. Some were directed against division on the Easter question, against the translation of ministers and usurious clerks, and against ordination of a bishop by a bishop that had not at least three other bishops with him. Canons 1 and 2 appear as one canon (13) in Fleury. Another canon (14 in Fleury) decreed that those who accused their brethren falsely should receive the communion only at death.

The councils of Ancyra and Neo-Cæsarea were held about the same time.

bishops, and passed laws by which he hoped to silence what he considered a turbulent and perverse faction.[1] It was fit, he thought, that those who, in their mad audacity, had appealed like heathens from the judgment of the assembled bishops, instead of accepting it as the judgment of Christ, should be deprived of their churches, and that their leader should be banished.

There are three points particularly to be noted with regard to this imperial interference.

1. The first has already been mentioned. The interference was not ultroneous. In appointing both the commissions and the council Constantine acted on the solicitation of one of the parties, and no one appears to have supposed that he was arrogating an authority that did not legitimately belong to him. This remark is equally applicable to the rehearsing of the case at Milan; for, though the Emperor expressed surprise and indignation at the appeal, he nevertheless heard the representatives of both parties, and decided between them in the exercise of a prerogative which was not challenged.

2. It may be admitted that, when the commission met, first at Rome and later at Arles, Constantine showed no inclination to dictate to the members. He contented himself with taking the initiative in setting the spiritual power in motion. It must be observed, however, that in the letter written in the beginning of the year 313 A.D. to the bishop Cæcilianus himself, he had spoken plainly enough of troublesome schismatics,—unmistakably the Donatists,—among whom he by no means intended that his money should be distributed, and who deserved to be sought out and punished. He did not dictate to the commission, but, in the letter to Miltiades (Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* x. 5), in which he informs him of its appointment, he lets him know most distinctly that what he desires before all is the preservation of the unity of the Holy Catholic Church. There is likewise preserved (Eusebius, *Ibid.*) a letter addressed to one of the bishops summoned to Arles, and it is written in the same strain. The Donatists

[1] The Donatists, whom Constantine had brought to his court under safe custody, threatening them with punishment, proposed that he should judge them himself, and prevailed. At Milan they were heard in the consistorium. Cæcilianus was present.

greatly miscalculated if they supposed that the Emperor's first canon would be like their own—the purity, and not the unity and concord, of the Church.

3. If the idea of a spiritual government, concentrated in one visible infallible head, had been fully developed, the prerogative of calling councils and otherwise "setting the spiritual powers in motion" would not have been, as it was by all parties, abandoned to the Emperor without hesitation and without a murmur. In the letter above referred to, Miltiades, Bishop of Rome, is addressed as one of four, and the others are spoken of as his colleagues and equals.

The measures of severity adopted by Constantine by no means tended to the restoration of peace and order. The party against which they were directed remained firm. After the death of Majorinus in 315 A.D. another Donatus—not the Donatus of Casae Nigrae—was raised to the vacant and dangerous post, and from him, it is generally said, although the honour is by some assigned to the other Donatus, the dissidents took their name "pars Donati."[1] The most violent ferment was produced among them by the persecuting policy of the Emperor, to which, probably because he found it to be ineffectual, he did not adhere. Returning to the principles of the edict of Milan, he exhorted the African bishops—for not only in Carthage, but in almost every city in that country, there was a counter-bishop—to leave their opponents to the judgment of God.

And yet persecution in this case might have been plausibly defended; for, though the majority of the Donatists may have been devout, orderly, useful citizens, they suffered in reputation through a peasants' war, and became naturally more obnoxious to the displeasure of the Emperor from the circumstance that they were joined by the "Agonistici"—"Milites Christi"—the "Lord's Champions," as they called themselves, who, being vagrant ascetics who lived on alms,[2] received the name "Circumcelliones," by which they are commonly known. Catholic writers, and, indeed, some other writers too, cannot find words strong enough to

[1] Formerly they had been "pars Majorini."

[2] "Genus hominum omnes cellas ('villages') circumiens rusticorum."—AUGUSTINE.

denounce the fanaticism of these men; but, while we may deplore it, it is but justice to remember that that fanaticism was engendered in the heat of pagan persecution, and, if we would not pass too stern a judgment on "traditores," who afterwards confessed their sin with tears, why should we not make some allowance for men who would not give up their Bibles, but who would most readily give up their bodies, to be burned, and who, in zeal for the God whose followers were so often tortured and slain, ventured on an unequal and useless warfare and demolished idols dedicated, as they believed, to demons? It was not many years since such excess had been committed and, with the result of kindling the spirit of resistance to a fiercer heart, had been avenged. It was no difficult thing to excite anew these men, who were led by natural affinity to connect themselves with the stern and dissatisfied party—the "pars Donati." Most honourable is it to Constantine, to whom the Circumcelliones could not but appear detestable, that he quickly recognised the folly of persisting in a persecution that was met in a spirit so fierce and determined. It is even related of him that, showing mildness and indulgence where, without violating the principles of toleration, he might have used the sword, he left unpunished their destruction of a church which he had himself caused to be erected in the town of Constantina. Constantine could be stern, even cruel, when he judged it politic. He has been accused of many things; but no one ever charged him with timidity, and yet the only notice he took of that gross outrage was by sending an order that the church should be built at his expense.

Unhappily, the wise policy to which Constantine had returned was not uniformly followed by his successors. His son Constans tried alternately presents and force. Donatus repelled the imperial officer who had been going about distributing money among the poor and accompanying the distribution with exhortations which plainly disclosed the object, and he repelled him with the remarkable words: *Quid est imperatori cum ecclesia?* ["What has the Emperor to do with the Church?"]. It cannot be questioned that the principle thus expressed by Donatus was speedily adopted by the whole party, but Hagenbach puts it somewhat too

strongly when he says that the fundamental theological dogma of the Donatists—or of the Circumcelliones, for it is of them he is immediately speaking—was the total separation of Church and State, while their socio-political dogma was liberty, equality, and community of goods—fraternity to the utmost.

Constans, provoked by the repulse of his messenger, and still more, as many believe, by new extravagances and crimes, which were of a communistic nature, such as the delivering of a debtor from his creditor, a slave from his master, committed by the Circumcelliones, issued edicts the design of which was not simply to repress crime,—an object with which many of the Donatists themselves would have sympathised,—but, by banishing their bishops, and robbing them of their churches, to compel all dissidents to worship with the Catholics.[1]

Gibbon concludes a chapter in which he tells of the barbarous cruelties committed by Constans on the Donatists, and especially on the Circumcelliones, whose "principal weapon was a huge and weighty club, which they termed an *Israelite*," and whose battle-cry was "Praise be to God," (*Deo Laudes*) with a paragraph the first words of which are: "The divisions of Christianity suspended the ruin of paganism," and of which the last words are: "Their zeal" (the zeal of the pagans) "was insensibly provoked by the insulting triumph of a proscribed sect; and their hopes were revived by the well-grounded confidence, that the presumptive heir of the empire, a young and valiant hero, who had delivered Gaul from the arms of the barbarians, had secretly embraced the religion of his ancestors."[2]

The temporary triumph of paganism in the reign of Julian, which the historian thus anticipates, was certainly caused in part by the divisions that existed among the Christians, and it was by no means the policy of that Emperor to make common cause with the Catholics for the extirpation of heresy. Under him, accordingly, the Donatists enjoyed rest and protection. Their churches were restored and their banished bishops recalled. But under the following Emperors,

[1] The Donatists, while assembled, were fallen upon by armed troops.

[2] *Decline and Fall*, chap. xxi.

persecutions broke out anew, and, though the dissidents were themselves divided, and the resistance which they offered to the secular arm was in some measure enfeebled by their mutual animosities, they continued powerful enough to disquiet the Church and embarrass the Government till the time of Augustine, who set himself to contend against them with another sword than that which had been so long tried in vain. In numerous writings, and by numerous discourses, he strove to convince them of the sin they committed by rending the body of Christ. He did not fail to argue against them, as the great French preacher afterwards argued against the Protestants, from the fact that, after renouncing communion with the Catholics, they had been subdivided into numerous and hostile parties.

At length, though many difficulties had been in the way, and though the reluctance of the Donatists was never entirely overcome, it was arranged to hold a conference. The Emperor, Honorius, had directed that it should meet. It was attended by two hundred and eighty-six bishops on the one side, and two hundred and seventy-nine on the other, and was held under the presidency of an imperial commissioner, the tribune Marcellinus, who was Augustine's personal friend. This conference was held in 411 A.D., after the controversy had dragged itself through a bitter century. The dominant party and the dissident party chose respectively seven speakers, of whom Augustine was the foremost on the one side, and a bishop named Petilianus on the other. The immediate result of the conference was precisely what might have been foreseen, and doubtless had been foreseen, by the numerous Donatists who, much against their will, entered into it. The president declared that the Catholics had conquered. It is said that some souls long estranged were won back to the Church; but the greater number of the Donatists deplored deeply their weakness in not adhering to the principle which they had at first expressed when resisting the proposal to hold a conference: "What fellowship can the sons of martyrs have with the race of the traditores?"

Persecution was renewed, and the lamentable thing in connection with its renewal is that Augustine, no longer content with persuasive dealing, justified it, and stirred up

the flames. We could wish that he had been rather of the spirit of Ambrose of Milan, whom he admired so much, and to whom he owed so much, or rather that he had been of the spirit of Christ, to whom he owed all, and who, as a Donatist said, sent fishermen, and not soldiers, to preach His faith. The words of the Saviour, "Compel them to come in," which express, as we all know, only strong, yearning love for those who are without, were actually wrested by the great Bishop of Hippo to justify persecution, as they have been since by men less illustrious. After this period, during which (429 A.D.) both Catholics and Donatists suffered from the invasion of the Vandals, the sect never recovered strength, but it did not become extinct till the end of the sixth century.

Of the two questions which were debated at the conference of 411 A.D.—namely: firstly, whether Felix of Aptunga (and Cæcilianus) had actually been a traditor, and, secondly, whether the Church loses its character as genuine and apostolic by communion with unworthy members—the latter alone is of a permanent interest.

According to the Donatists, whose favourite image was that of the bride without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, the first and most essential note of the true Church was the holiness of its members, which consequently was to be guarded with the utmost strictness. At the date of the Council of Arles, the sin of Cæcilianus and Felix, they held, had passed to all the adherents of the Catholic Church (so-called). All who had refused to come out and be separated had become partakers of it. From that date, the majority of them maintained, the true Church was that of the Donatists, and only among them were the sacraments validly dispensed, as only among them was discipline faithfully administered. The Donatists did not deny that there might be hypocrites among themselves, but it is scarcely just to them to say that this admission is fatal to their subjective theory, and to argue, as it is sometimes argued, that, "if the Church compromises her character for holiness by contact with unworthy persons at all, it matters not whether they be openly unworthy before men or not, and no Church whatever would be left on earth."[1]

[1] Schaff [*Church History*, vol. ii. p. 368].

What the Donatists contended for was that the ideal perfect Church must be realised as far as possible in the actual, empirical, and imperfect. If spot or blemish or any such thing became visible on the bride, it must be removed.

The Donatists were inconsistent with themselves, however, in one of the main applications of their theory, when, admitting that there might be hypocrites in the true Church, they contended that the validity of ordinances depended on the subjective state of the person who administered them. The opposite theory, represented by Augustine—the objective realistic theory—equally asserts the holiness of the Church, but makes it dependent, not on this or that member who may enter it, but on the union of the whole with the living Head. In that union Augustine finds the essence of the Church. From it is derived the holiness which the Church possesses—both the external holiness which belongs to it as a whole, and the measure of internal holiness which may be acquired by individual members. From it, too, he argued historically, tracing the existence of the Church in unbroken succession through bishops and apostles to Christ Himself, is derived the validity of ecclesiastical functions. There are, indeed, many unworthy members in the Church, but amputation or excision is to be resorted to only in extreme cases. It may be hoped that the great healthy body of the Church will overcome the morbid elements it has received into itself, and assimilate them, as far as possible, to the sound and vigorous. A glorious building, resting on an immovable foundation, may have some bad enough material in its walls. God is able to make His temple stand as it is, and why should the rash hand of man attempt now to separate the precious from the vile? The day will declare what is worthy to stand for ever, and what is fit to be destroyed. The parable of the tares and wheat, and that of the net which gathered of every sort, were frequently adduced in the controversy; but the Donatists, it is scarcely necessary to say, interpreted them differently from the Catholics. As to the former parable, they laid great stress on the words, "the field is the world," and as to the latter, they maintained that the bad gathered in the net were unknown sinners, not open transgressors.

Augustine is sometimes charged—both parties indeed are charged—with confounding the notions of the visible and the invisible Church. On the other hand, some find in writers on both sides the germ of the distinction "which[1] regards the invisible, not as another Church but as the *ecclesiola in ecclesia* (or *ecclesiis*)" ["the Church in the Church"], "as the smaller communion of true believers among professors, and thus, as the true substance of the visible Church, and as contained within its limits, like the soul in the body, or the kernel in the shell." Mention is made, however, of only one writer, a Donatist—the grammarian Tychonius—that seems to have clearly apprehended that the "body" was not necessarily one outward, visible organisation. Even Roman Catholic writers speak of this heretic as temperate and reasonable. In his day he was not in favour with his own party, or with its adversaries; but out of that obstruction which existed in others only in germ, grew in time a comprehensive charity, excellent and singular. He preferred the Donatists, but he did not unchurch the Catholics. He spoke of a *corpus Domini bipartitum* ["a two-fold body of the Lord"], consisting, on the one hand, of those who truly believe in Him, and, on the other hand, of those who have only an outward communion with the same Head, who draw nigh to the Lord with their lips, but in heart are far from Him. Tychonius was at one with the Catholics in the two great truths which were asserted against the Donatists, and which have come to be generally recognised—the truths, namely, that the Church does not lose its nature and attributes by the presence of unworthy members, and that the validity of ordinances does not depend on the personal character of him who administers them.[2]

[1] Schaff [*Church History*, vol. ii. p. 369].

[2] "It is the Lord who baptizes," Augustine had said at the Conference of 411 A.D. Tychonius, it may be added, disapproved of the alliance of the Church with the State, and of the laxity of the Catholic Church.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE ARIAN CONTROVERSY—DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY BEFORE THE NICENE COUNCIL.

We now pass to a doctrinal controversy, in which the figure of Constantine appears still more conspicuously, and which agitated the meanest of his Christian subjects to such a degree that, in the east at all events, it was discussed in the streets and shops, not only with intense interest, but with a fierceness of passion such as internal disputes had never excited—at least over so wide an area. This keenness, doubtless, may be accounted for in great measure by the circumstance that it was not rebuked and restrained either by the suffering, or by the fear, of persecution at the hands of the common foe; but it must be admitted that the intense importance of the subject cannot be overrated. Thus, in a well-known *History of Philosophy* (Schwegler's) I find the following:[1] "Neo-Platonism, by its overleaping speculation, and practically by its modification of the sense, made a last and despairing attempt to overcome this separation" (the separation between the Divine and self), "or to bury itself within it by bringing the two sides forcibly together. The attempt was in vain, and the old philosophy, totally exhausted, came to its end. Dualism is therefore the rock on which it split. This problem, thus left without a solution, Christianity took up. It assumed for its principle the idea which the ancient thinking had not known how to carry out, affirming that the separation between God and man might be overcome, and

[1] Some have traced the doctrine of the Trinity to the Neo-Platonic School, of which the chief representative was a pupil of Ammonius Saccas, Plotinus, who lived about the middle of the third century. Reason or world intelligence flows from the primal One—the world-soul is the copy of reason, permeated by it and actualising it in an outer world. They exhibited the unmistakable tendency to represent a pagan copy of Christianity, which should be at the same time a philosophy and a universal religion.

that the human and the Divine could be united in one. The speculative fundamental idea of Christianity is, that God has become incarnate; and this had its practical exhibition (for Christianity was a practical religion) in the idea of the atonement, and the demand of the new birth, *i.e.*, the positive purifying of the flesh from its corruptions, instead of holding it, as asceticism, in a merely negative relation."[1]

Arianism denied this fundamental idea of Christianity—that God became incarnate. In other words, we may say, though the personality of the Holy Spirit was not immediately under discussion, it denied the doctrine of the Trinity, which was received and had its practical, and to a vast extent, we may say after Schwegler, its speculative significance in its relation to the economy of salvation, and, in part, to the manifestation of God in the flesh.

As to the fathers that preceded the age of Constantine, it cannot be questioned that some of them used language concerning the Persons of the Godhead which it is very difficult to reconcile with the orthodox doctrine as afterwards formulated. In Tertullian himself, who gave us the word "Trinity," there are passages which offer very serious difficulties, but the great body of those fathers, as Principal Cunningham says,—though perhaps he puts it just strongly enough,—"are full and unequivocal in asserting the proper divinity of our Saviour, as implying the consubstantiality and co-eternity of the Son with the Father, though not always with full precision of statement and perfect accuracy of language,—qualities which the history of the Church seems to prove that uninspired men seldom or never even approach to, upon any topic, until after it has been subjected to a full and sifting controversial discussion. And it is to be remembered that, though Sabellianism and simple humanitarianism, or what we now call Socinianism, were somewhat discussed during the first three centuries, and were rejected by the Church, Arianism did not, during that period, undergo a discussion, and was not formally decided upon by the Church till the time of the Council of Nice."[3]

[1] [Trans. by Julius H. Seelye, sec. xxii. 1.]
[2] Theophilus of Antioch used the word "Trias."
[3] *Historical Theology*, vol. i. p. 279.

That the Son was worshipped as Divine by the early Church we know from the testimony of Pliny as well as from Christian sources. In the newly-discovered portion of Clement of Rome, the writer, who had been appealed to by Basil, says: "As God liveth, and the Lord Jesus Christ liveth, and the Holy Ghost, (who are) the faith and hope of the elect."[1] Polycarp's prayer at the stake, recorded in the epistle of the church of Smyrna, ends with the doxology: "With whom to Thee and the Holy Spirit be the glory both now and evermore."[2] Origen compared the Trinity with three concentric circles, the First Person embracing the greatest, and the Third the smallest space. The Father acts upon all creation, the Logos upon the rational creation, and the Holy Ghost (effectually) upon the saints in the Church. From this figure, which represents to us a diversity of operations, it would not be safe to conclude that Origen held a difference in essence, or even in dignity; but we know certainly that he taught a difference in the latter. He taught the subordination (not merely as Mediator) of the Son to the Father, and of the Spirit to the Son. The co-eternity of the Son with the Father he distinctly maintains, but it is important to observe that, as to the ultimate ground of the existence of the Son, which he would by no means see in a physical process (recall Tertullian's figures—sun, ray, point of the ray (apex)—root, stem, fruit), he is far from employing uniformly the same language. Here he oscillates, placing it sometimes in the essence, sometimes in the will of God. Grant the latter, and it might be argued, whether with irresistible force or not, that the relation of the Son to the

[1] [Ζῇ γὰρ ὁ Θεὸς καὶ ζῇ ὁ Κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, ἥ τε πίστις καὶ ἡ ἐλπὶς τῶν ἐκλεκτῶν.]

Barnabas (Ep. 6), understands Gen. i. 26, as addressed to the Son. So also in "one of us" in iii. 22. Several writers refer to Gen. xix. 24.

Hermas (*Simil.* V.) takes the Divine in Christ to be the Holy Spirit.

Ignatius calls Christ "our God."

Justin (*Dial. cum. Typhone*): Ἕτερος τοῦ θεοῦ ἀριθμῷ, ἀλλὰ οὐ γνώμῃ, ἀπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς δυνάμει αὐτοῦ καὶ βουλῇ προειλθών.

In his *Greater Apology*, he says: "We worship first the Creator, then Jesus, ἐν δευτέρᾳ χώρᾳ ἔχοντες, and then, ἐν τρίτῃ τάξει τὸ πνεῦμα προφητικόν.

The co-eternity and the subordination are distinctly taught by Irenæus. He compares the Son and the Spirit to "hands"—the "hands of God."

[2] μεθ' οὗ σοι (the Father) καὶ πνεύματι ἁγίῳ ἡ δόξα καὶ νῦν καὶ εἰς τοὺς μέλλοντας αἰῶνας.

Father was not immanent, not necessary, not eternal; and hence, though Origen himself taught the eternal generation, he has been designated, with some show of reason, the father of Arianism. In him, as Baur and others observe, both doctrines—that of Arius and that of Athanasius—are found in germ.

But let us notice some decidedly heretical views on the doctrine of the Trinity, or, we should perhaps rather say, on the doctrine of the Divine Unity, that had been promulgated in the course of the third century. It is not impossible that these views may have originated in opposition to Montanism. The Montanists, we know, were wont to appeal to the gospel of John in support of the doctrine of the Paraclete, who, they contended, revealed himself specially in the founder of their sect, and to the Apocalypse in support of their Chiliaism—the doctrine of the thousand years' reign, which they maintained was pending, and the near prospect of which made it imperative to cultivate the most rigid asceticism. Now, there were some who, in their one-sided antagonism, rejected those books entirely, and so rejected, along with the doctrine of the Paraclete, that of the Logos and of His Divine power. These were the persons to whom Epiphanius gave the designedly ambiguous name Alogi, which may mean the "Absurd." Some aversion to mystery led some to give a rationalistic explanation of the passages that seemed to teach the supreme Divinity of the Son and the personality of the Spirit. Many took the standpoint of Judaism,[1] as they understood it, holding fast to the unity of God as one person (*μοναρχία*) and, with Philo, calling the Godhead a pure monad. Making the phrase *monarchiam tenemus* their watchword, they maintained that faith in the supreme Divinity of Christ was a relapse into polytheism. Those who contended for the unity of God against the doctrine of the Trinity, which they supposed to be in contradiction to it, may all be comprehended under the name "Monarchians," but hardly with the same propriety under that of "Antitrinitarians," or under that of "Unitarians." They are usually presented as three groups, but are sometimes reduced to two—"Reverâ quasi inter duos latrones crucifigitur Dominus."

[1] They are not necessarily of Ebionite origin.

1. The first group may be called Unitarians. They are usually termed Dynamic or Dynamistic Monarchians, because, denying the essential Divinity of Christ, they spoke of the Divine power which dwelt in Him as it had in the prophets of the Old Testament. It may be added, however, that some of them, if not all, held that he was indisputably exalted above the ancient prophets, not only because the Spirit dwelt in Him in greater measure, but because he was the supernaturally begotten Messiah. In fact, they sometimes appealed to Luke i. 35,[1] in support of their doctrine. It was by the *δύναμις* ("power") of the Highest that the man became the Son of God. These Dynamic Monarchians are sometimes designated also Ebionitish, but only so far justly; for, like the Ebionites, they rejected the essential Divinity of Christ, but when they spoke of a union between the Divine and the human in His person, through the power of God operating upon Him, it does not appear that any of them regarded His union as beginning at the baptism.

Among the most notable of this group was Theodotus the tanner. It is related of him that, having denied Christ in time of persecution, he urged, in his own justification, that he had denied not God but a man. Coming from Byzantium to Rome, he made a number of converts, but was excommunicated by Victor about 200 A.D. His party, however, seems for a time rather to have gained ground. It received the name Theodotians, and, more frequently, Artemonites, from one Artemon, who also came to Rome, and who appears to have advocated identically the same doctrines as Theodotus. The party numbered in its ranks a second Theodotus, called "the money-changer" (*ὁ τραπεζίτης*), to distinguish him from the "worker in leather" (*ὁ σκυτεύς*). Theodotus the money-changer appears as the head of a subdivision of the party. This subdivision was known as the party of the Melchizedekians. Theodotus the money-changer taught that there was a higher mediator than Christ. This was Melchizedec, the mediator between God and angels, whom Theodotus probably regarded as a Theophany. The Theodotians, whose doctrine had been condemned by the Bishop of Rome, would have a bishop of their own, and a certain Natalis, who had been a

[1] δύναμις ὑψίστου ἐπισκιάσει σοι· διὸ καὶ τὸ γεννώμενον ἅγιον κληθήσεται υἱὸς θεοῦ.

faithful witness for Christ, but who had been perverted, was induced to accept the office.) There is found in Eusebius (*Eccl. Hist.* v. 28) an extraordinary story of this man—of a kind, however, that is not unknown in later centuries. "I shall remind many of the brethren of a fact," says an anonymous writer, whom he quotes, "that happened in our days, which, had it happened in Sodom, I think would have led them to reflection. Natalis was persuaded by them" (the Artemonites) "to be created a bishop, with a salary from them of one hundred and fifty denarii a month. Being connected, therefore, with them, he was frequently brought to reflection by the Lord in his dreams. For the merciful God and our Lord Jesus Christ would not that he who had been a witness of his own sufferings should perish, though he was out of the Church. But as he paid little attention to these visions, being ensnared both by the desire of presiding among them and that foul gain which destroys so many, he was finally lashed by holy angels through the whole night, and was thus most severely punished; so that he rose early in the morning, and putting on sackcloth, and covered with ashes, in great haste, and bathed in tears, he fell down before Zephyrinus, the bishop, rolling at the feet, not only of the clergy, but even of the laity, and thus moved the compassionate Church of Christ with his tears. And although he implored their clemency with much earnestness, and pointed to the strokes of the lashes he had received, he was at last scarcely admitted to communion."

There is one remark obviously suggested by this passage. Frequently, where there is no difficulty in obtaining the opinions of a heretical sect—and there is no difficulty whatever in the case of the Artemonites—it is difficult to discover how much, if anything at all, is true in a narrative that goes into the particulars of a heretic's private life, even though it should not follow him into his dreams. Some caution is needed in dealing even with his public life.

The most influential representative of this class of Monarchians was Paul of Samosata. Of humble extraction, he was appointed Bishop of Antioch in 260 A.D., but, while holding this sacred office, he held also a secular one, and he is said to have preferred his civil to his ecclesiastical title. He was *ducenarius procurator* (a finance minister in receipt of

two hundred sestertia per annum[1]). Like the Artemonites generally, he believed at once that Jesus was "a mere man, born of the Holy Spirit" (*ψιλὸς ἄνθρωπος, γεννηθεὶς ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου*), and even used the expression *Θεὸς ἐκ παρθένου* ["God born of a virgin"]. The Logos dwelt in Him, not in person but in quality, as a Divine virtue, by which He became worthy of deification. The most remarkable point to be mentioned with regard to his teaching is that, among other expressions by which he veiled his heresy, he spoke of Christ as *ὁμοούσιος τῷ Θεῷ* ["of the same substance as God"], and the evidence, not only of Semi-Arians, but of Basil the Great and Theodoret, is pretty clear,—though some have not been convinced by it,—that the synod that condemned Paul rejected this expression, which afterwards became the shibboleth of orthodoxy. But if the synod rejected the word, it could only be in the sense in which it was attributed to Christ by Paul. If the view of his adversaries was correct, Christ, according to him, would, while *ὁμοούσιος τῷ Θεῷ*, have an *οὐσία* ["substance," "essence"] of His own equally with the Father. There would thus be three *οὐσίαι*.

Another notable point is that he altered the Church hymns with a view to the propagation of his peculiar tenets among the people.

At the first synod, which was held at Antioch in 264 or 265 A.D., Paul succeeded so well in dissembling his opinions that the bishops united in expressing their satisfaction, and, having thanked God for the harmony which prevailed among them, separated, but only to be convened soon again on finding that no real harmony existed. The probability, at least, is that a second synod was held shortly after the first. This, however, is a matter of dispute, on which it would be impossible to enter without occupying too much time. At the last synod, whether that was the third or the second, Paul is said to have been completely unmasked by one Malchion, who had been a successful teacher of rhetoric at Antioch, and was now an ordained priest, enjoying a high reputation for his pure life and ardent faith. The accused, who held as exalted a position as any man in the Christian world, unless you except the Bishop of Rome, was convicted, deposed, and excommuni-

[1] A sestertium = £8, 17s. 1d.

cated. Before breaking up, the council sent an encyclical letter "to Dionysius" (Bishop of Rome) "and Maximus" (Bishop of Alexandria), "and to all our fellow-ministers throughout the world, the bishops and presbyters and deacons, and to the whole Catholic Church throughout the world under heaven."[1]

This encyclical letter has not come down to us entire, but what is preserved of it in Eusebius extends over several pages. The substance of it is given in the *History of the Christian Councils*.[2] I abridge it still further.

"Paul, who was very poor at first, had acquired great riches by illegal proceedings, by extortions and frauds. He was extremely proud and arrogant. He had accepted worldly employments, and always went out surrounded by a train of servants. Out of vanity he read and dictated letters while walking. He had a throne in the church. His gesticulations were theatrical and extravagant; he struck his thigh and spurned things with his foot. He persecuted those who, during the sermon, did not join with the clappers of hands bribed to applaud him. He suppressed the hymns written in honour of Christ, under the protest that they were of recent origin, to substitute for them at the feast of Easter hymns sung by women in his own honour. His evil companionship caused much scandal. Finally, he had fallen into the heresy of Artemon. The synod had thought it sufficient to proceed on this last point. They had therefore excommunicated Paul, and elected Domnus in his place. All, then, were invited to recognise Domnus (son of Demetrianus, Paul's predecessor). Paul might, if he pleased, write to Artemon, and the followers of Artemon might hold communion with Paul."

Now, there may be exaggeration and colouring in this document, but its subject was a conspicuous personage. Most of it contains charges the grounds of which were notorious if true, and which could easily have been refuted if false, and therefore there is little reason to doubt that Paul was, as he is commonly represented, a vain-glorious, worldly man, if not extortionate, unjust, and adulterous.[3]

[1] [Eus. *Eccl. Hist.*, vii. 30.] [2] [Hefele, 1ter band, s. 139 (§ 9).]

[3] [Gibbon characteristically remarks: "Notwithstanding these scandalous vices, if Paul of Samosata had preserved the purity of the orthodox faith, his

Notwithstanding the sentence of deposition, Paul retained for some time possession of his church, being favoured by Zenobia, Queen of Palmyra; but the conquest of the Queen by Aurelian was fatal to the heretic. The Emperor referred it to "the Christian Bishops of Italy and Rome" (Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* vii. 30) to decide between Paul and Domnus. They decided, it is hardly necessary to say, in favour of the latter. Aurelian, says Gibbon, "considered the bishops of Italy as the most impartial and respectable judges among the Christians, and as soon as he was informed, that they had unanimously approved the sentence of the council, he acquiesced in their opinion, and immediately gave orders that Paul should be compelled to relinquish the temporal possessions belonging to an office, of which, in the judgment of his brethren, he had been regularly deprived. But while we applaud the justice, we should not overlook the policy of Aurelian, who was desirous of restoring and cementing the dependence of the provinces on the capital, by every means which could bind the interest or prejudices of any part of his subjects."[1]

2. More widely accepted than the doctrines of Artemon and Paul, who considered Christ, as it was phrased, *κάτωθεν* ["from beneath"], were those of the second group of Monarchians, frequently called Patripassians, who considered Him *ἄνωθεν* ["from above"]—those who, in the interest of the unity, denied the distinct personality of the Son, while they recognised His Divinity.

The first conspicuous representative of this group was Praxeas. He had distinguished himself as a confessor in the persecution under Marcus Aurelius. From Asia Minor he came to Rome in the time of Bishop Victor, or of his predecessor Eleutherus, and here propounded his Monarchial tenets, for a time, apparently, giving no shock to the Catholic consciousness. Some writers even allege that he gained over Victor to his views. One of his objects in visiting Rome was to procure the condemnation of Montanism, and, as he was

reign over the capital of Syria would have ended only with his life." The rest of the sentence is still more characteristic: "And had a seasonable persecution intervened, an effort of courage might perhaps have placed him in the rank of saints and martyrs."—*Decline and Fall*, ch. xvi.]

[1] *Decline and Fall*, ch. xvi.

successful in this point, it is not impossible that the ardent Tertullian, the great representative of Montanism, suspected Victor and the people of Rome of greater sympathy with the Monarchian principles of Praxeas than they actually felt. Tertullian declares, in words that are often quoted, that Praxeas "executed the great works of the devil in the capital": *Paracletum fugavit, et Patrem crucifixit* ["He banished the Spirit, and crucified the Father"].

At a later period Praxeas went to Africa, but, though he gained adherents there, some have inferred from a passage in Tertullian, which, however, is by no means clear, that he recanted and gave Tertullian a written declaration to the effect that he accepted the Catholic faith.

The doctrine of Praxeas, briefly stated, was as follows:— Setting out from the strict principle of the Divine unity, he did not deny that the one God had a Son, but he held that the Sonship was created by the miraculous conception. The distinction which he recognised in the Person of the Man Christ Jesus was not that between Divine and human, but that between Spirit and flesh. The Spirit in Jesus Christ he identifies with the one God, in whom there is no distinction of persons, and the supernatural generation of the Man Christ Jesus by the Spirit of God is to be understood of the close and immediate union into which God entered with the flesh at His birth. Properly speaking, it is only the flesh that is begotten. According to his great adversary Tertullian, Praxeas constantly reiterated in support of his tenets the texts: "I am the Lord, and there is none else; there is no God beside": "I and my Father are one": "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," as if the whole Bible consisted of these three passages, and taught that the Father had been born, had hungered and thirsted, had suffered, and died, and been buried. But, however unscriptural and untenable the doctrines of Praxeas may appear, it is scarcely just to substitute the word "Father" for the conception of Christ as the Divine Spirit in union with human flesh. The Monarchian of this class, though he might ascribe a *pati* ["suffering"] or *copati* ["suffering with"] to the one God, would not have said that the one God was born and died. The name Patripassian, however, has stuck.

Noetus of Smyrna, who likewise identified the Father with the Son, taught about the year 200 A.D. Though his doctrine was made known in Rome, not by himself in person, but by his scholar Epigonus and by his disciple, Cleomenes, his celebrity seems to have been greater than that of Praxeas, and he has been called the father of Patripassianism. It is recorded that, when called to account before a council, he asked: "What evil, then, do I commit in glorifying Christ?" (*τί οὖν κακὸν ποιῶ, δοξάζων τὸν Χριστόν*).

Hippolytus—but what weight should be attached to his testimony is matter of great dispute—accuses the two Roman bishops, Zephyrinus and his successor Callistus, of favouring and propagating the views of Noetus. It is certain that the latter condemned the phase of Monarchianism that bears the name of Sabellius, but this is quite consistent with the charge of his adopting tenets akin to Noetianism, and, still more obviously, with the same charge with regard to Zephyrinus. I have been struck with the language of a Roman Catholic historian, who, of course, must at any price save the orthodoxy of the popes. Zephyrinus, he says, treated the highly gifted Sabellius with mildness at first, in order to gain him back to the Church; but, as he persisted obstinately in his error, Callistus (not Zephyrinus, but his successor) excommunicated him.[1]

Before proceeding to speak of the Monarchian, or, as he is more distinctively named, the Modalist, Sabellius, it ought to be stated that both parties stigmatised their adversary with an odious name. "Ditheist" was even a more offensive name than "Patripassian," as it imputed a doctrine which was, of course, most emphatically repudiated by those to whom it was applied.

Sabellius, by far the greatest of the Monarchians, taught, as has been indicated, in the time of Zephyrinus (202–218 A.D.) at Rome. For here, as Milman has observed, though the

[1] It is said that Callistus, before he became Bishop of Rome, convinced Sabellius of the truth of the views held by Noetus. [I suppose Döllinger is the historian to whom reference is made. In his *Hippolytus and Callistus* (Trans. by Plummer: p. 212) we read: "Zephyrinus had hitherto allowed Sabellius to remain in his communion, probably because he too regarded Sabellius as one who was hesitating, and might still be won over. . . . The new bishop at once excommunicated him because his doctrine was damnable."]

war was waged by Greek combatants in the Greek language, must be the chosen battle-field of the conflict.[1] Sabellius, as we have seen, was excommunicated by Callistus. This happened about 220 A.D. He appears to have settled afterwards at Ptolemais in Egypt, where he developed his doctrine to a system, of which it is one of the chief characteristics that the Third Person of the Trinity is included in his speculations.

Like the other Monarchians, Sabellius sets out from the strict idea of a Monad, but with him the Monad unfolds itself into a Triad, which, however, is a Trinity, not of essence, but of manifestation. His doctrine was condemned about 260,[2] at Alexandria.

The accounts of this system in Athanasius, Theodoret, and others, do not always perfectly harmonise. But it is to be borne in mind that his doctrine is gathered from the pages of those who combated it, and who may not always have presented it in a way with which he would himself have been satisfied. Further, in the earlier part of his career, he may have used language that would be unsuitable when his views took a coherent and systematic shape. And further still, his adversaries do not quote always from Sabellius, but sometimes from Sabellians, who may have misapprehended or modified his teaching. Without entering on an examination of particular passages, I will briefly state his doctrine as he appears to have taught it in its fully developed form.

In opposition to the prevailing view, by which the Logos was hypostatised, and apprehended as identical with the Son of God, Sabellius sometimes employed that term to denote God as a Being who essentially possessed the attribute of intelligence, but commonly it is not—to use the old expression—the λόγος ἐνδιάθετος, but the λόγος προφορικός of which he speaks. The Logos is God so far as God reveals Himself. The Logos is the one absolute God coming forth from silence, creating and upholding the universe. The Divine activity is a continuous διαλέγεσθαι. In the history of the religious development of the race, the Logos, or the Monad in action, is unfolded into a Triad,—three πρόσωπα, or *personæ*,—three aspects in which God presents Himself,—

[1] [*Lat. Christianity*, vol. i. p. 49.]

[2] Sabellius may have been dead then.

three stages of manifestation and modes of working (for the two ideas are combined): first, the Father, by whom He reveals Himself in the giving of the law; second, the Son, by whom He reveals Himself in the flesh; third, the Holy Spirit, by whom He reveals Himself in the Church. Though Sabellius is accused of having been inconsistent in his use of the word Father, meaning by it sometimes the Monad, and sometimes the first member of the Triad, it is beyond question that the essential feature of his system is that the *εἷς θεὸς ἐν τρισὶ προσώποις* is the one God in three different forms or modes of manifestation. It is to be noticed that he teaches that the one God coming forth from silence in the creation of the world becomes thereby not the Father, but the *πρόσωπον* of the Father. The Divine manifestation of the Old Testament economy has the creation as its presupposition. As to the analogies which he is said to have derived from the sun —its disc, its enlightening power, its warming influence—and from man, as consisting of body, soul, and spirit, they are not of course very helpful, but it is possible to draw some meaning out of them; though they have been pronounced, sometimes the first particularly, sometimes the second particularly, "unworthy of his evident speculative discrimination."

1. In Sabellianism (noticed by Athanasius) may be seen the Stoic view of God's relation to the world, or, at least, such modes of expression as the Stoic employed. We have, on the one hand, an *ἐκτείνεσθαι* or *πλατύνεσθαι*—an "extension"—and, on the other, a *συντέλλεσθαι*—a "contraction." But whether he conceived of this *ἔκτασις* and *συστολή*—this coming forth from silence and return—as a single process which was to be renewed *ad infinitum*, we cannot say, but certainly it is agreeable to the entire structure of his theory to say that he regarded the three *πρόσωπα* as temporary forms of manifestation.

2. Sabellianism has this in common with the Catholic doctrine as it was ultimately fixed, that it taught the co-ordination of the Persons; and so, it may be justly said, his theory so far prepared the way for the Nicene creed. The theory of subordination—not a mediatorial but an essential and eternal subordination—had many powerful supporters

when Sabellius published his doctrines, and it cannot be doubted that he helped to overcome it.

I would just add this: It may seem an easy thing to refute the doctrine of this eminent man—whose life, by the way, must have been pure, for, had it been otherwise, his adversaries would not have failed to acquaint us with the fact. Many passages of Scripture may appear to you utterly irreconcilable with it, but whether such speculations as his are incompatible with a soul-purifying, world-conquering faith in Christ as the one Mediator, is a question which some true adherents of the Catholic doctrine, such as Hagenbach,[1] answer unhesitatingly in the negative.

These, then, are the two classes of Monarchians:

1. Those who made the Divine an accident of the human in Christ; and

2. Those who made the human an accident of the Divine;

Paul of Samosata being the chief representative of the one, and Sabellius by far the most remarkable representative of the other.

Some writers speak of a third, an intermediate class, represented by Beryllus of Bostra, in Arabia. According to Eusebius, Beryllus taught that our Lord and Redeemer, before His incarnation, had no existence *κατ' ἰδίαν οὐσίας περιγραφήν*, *i.e.* as a person; and that, when He came into existence, He had no divinity of His own (*θεότητα ἰδίαν*), but that the Divinity of the Father dwelt in Him. It is difficult to ascertain precisely his view of the constitution of Christ's Person, but whether or not he held with the Apollinarians—or at least one division of the Apollinarians—that the Logos took the place of the human soul in Christ, it seems to many sufficiently clear that he ought to be ranked with those who identified, or whose tendency it was to identify, the Son with the Father. Schaff, though he does not profess thoroughly to understand the system of Beryllus, regards him as "the stepping-stone from simple Patripassianism to Sabellian Modalism."

At a synod, held in Bostra in 244 A.D., Beryllus was convinced of his error by the famous Origen, and not only abjured it, but thanked the eminent instructor who had

[1] [*Kirchengesch.*, 16te Vorlesung.]

reclaimed him. Theological disputations seldom end so happily, but it is recorded that Origen, candid and reasonable, as well as cogent, in argument, and mighty in the Scriptures, was requested to come from Cæsarea (in Palestine) to another Arabian synod, to argue against the Hypnopsychites,[1] which he did with the same "success as in the matter of Beryllus."

The tendency to bring into prominence the human element in the Person of Christ, which, as we have seen, Paul of Samosata carried to an extreme, or to which, at all events, he sacrificed the Divine element, was characteristic of the school of Antioch, where Paul had been bishop. The head of this school at the beginning of the fourth century was Lucian, a presbyter of the city of Antioch, who is said to have shared to a great extent the heretical tenets of Paul, but who, whatever his precise views of Christian truth, sealed his attachment to it by his martyrdom, which took place at Nicomedia, under the madman Maximin, in 311 A.D., the year in which the first edict of toleration was issued. In the school of this man not a few who afterwards became conspicuous imbibed a free and critical spirit, antagonistic to the Alexandrian theology,[2] as it was now developing itself, and as it was soon, in the expressive language of one of his biographers, to become flesh and blood in Athanasius.

[1] Those who believed that the soul fell asleep with the body, to awake with it at the resurrection.

[2] Dionysius of Alexandria had emphasised, in opposition to Sabellianism, one side of the Origenistic view of subordination, so that he seemed to Dionysius at Rome to be falling into Tritheism. The Roman bishop corrected and convinced (?) him, by insisting on what was now recognised in the west as the faith of the Church—One in Three, who are equal in power and glory.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE ARIAN CONTROVERSY (*continued*)—ARIUS—THE COUNCIL OF NICÆA.

AMONG the pupils of Lucian was a native of Libya, described as having "a lean and hungry look." He has given his name to a controversy which, to say nothing of the vast intrinsic importance attached to it by most Christians, was most momentous in its outward consequences, and which, if it may be said to have been settled at the end of two generations, was followed by a series of controversies essentially connected with it, which for centuries tore the Church and agitated the Empire. The scholar of Lucian, with whom that protracted war began, was Arius (Ἄρειος). He was deacon in Alexandria, we know, in the year 311 A.D., when Petrus, the bishop of that city, as well as Lucian of Antioch, suffered martyrdom. Under Achillas, who succeeded Petrus, but died after a year, he was a presbyter. He seems to have been on a good footing with both bishops, and also, for some time, with Alexander, who followed Achillas, and under whom the controversy broke out.

It is to be distinguished from previous disputes on the same question; for—

1. The school of Alexandria adopted and followed out to its consequences the idea of the eternal generation of the Son from the essence of the Father, on which Origen had not uniformly used the same language, and so abandoned the idea of subordination, which had been held, not only by that great scholar, but by some other celebrated fathers. Arius, on the other hand, took hold of the idea of generation from the will of God, which Origen had often appeared to favour, and pursued it to what seemed to be its necessary consequence. We have, then, on the orthodox side, greater clearness and con-

sistency of view than formerly, it now attaining its expression in the word ὁμοούσιον.

2. The controversy to which Arius has given his name was not a merely local one, nor was it confined to learned circles or schools. It assumed the vastest dimensions, interesting profoundly the body of the Christian people throughout the Empire. Everyone admits its world-historic importance. But as to the questions involved, and the gain to theology from their discussion and ecclesiastical settlement, judgments have been pronounced that differ from one another most widely. I do not speak of those who regard all religions as unimportant in themselves, but of those who recognise the religious nature of man, and, whether accepting or rejecting the supernatural element in it, acknowledge the Divine excellence of Christianity. It may interest you to hear some of the judgments that are so remarkably divergent.

The first I give is that of Eusebius of Cæsarea, the historian, whose sympathies, for a while at least, were rather with Arius than with his opponents. "Who knows," he exclaimed to the combatants, "how the soul is united with the body, and how it leaves it? and yet we venture to inquire into the eternal essence of the Godhead. Christ says, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life — not he who knows how He is begotten of the Father. Were the latter the case, no man could attain to salvation."

I will now quote a writer of our own time, and partly because he is not a professed theologian. "It will readily be perceived," says Earl Russel, "how tempting was the prospect of leaving the beaten roads of the early Christians to wander through the pathless forests of controversy, and ascend the heights of a new heaven. The early Christian, seeking to imitate the benevolent Samaritan who ministered to the wounded traveller, or to follow the example of the merciful Lord, who forgave his debtor, or like the loving father, to receive with joy a penitent son, followed plain precepts, and practised unobtrusive virtues. But the doctor of theology, who displayed acuteness in pointing out inferences which Christ had never revealed to His disciples, came victor out of conflicts with his learned rivals. He defined what Jesus had left obscure, and explained relations to the

Godhead which Christ had left to the conclusions of private judgment. Thus Athanasius, followed by crowds of admiring pupils, radiant with flashes of rhetoric, and exulting over the opponents whom he had crushed, stood at last on the narrow summit of orthodoxy, neither lost in the fog of the Sabellian nor stopped by the stumbling-block of the Arian, and waved his triumphant banner over Europe, Asia, and Africa. It is to be lamented, however, that, in this difficult struggle, the spirit of Christianity was lost—that man was taught to hate his neighbour and to exalt himself."[1] In the same chapter, Earl Russel goes so far as to apply to Athanasius the language used by Milman of Archbishop Laud.[2] He was a "melancholy exemplification of the appalling fact that some of the nobler qualities of the churchman may co-exist with the total want of the purest Christian virtues, and blend with some of the worst, most unchristian vices."[3]

Athanasius was not faultless, but it is difficult to account for this extravagance of censure.

The next whose judgment I quote is a theologian, and no man in Europe has more thoroughly studied the development of the doctrine of the Trinity. The passage in the Church history to which I refer is, I find, quoted by Schaff. He, after remarking that though, to a superficial eye, this great struggle seems a metaphysical subtlety and a fruitless logomachy, revolving about a Greek word, it appears in a very different light to Baur, "who is characterised by a much deeper discernment of the philosophical and historical import of the conflicts in the history of Christian doctrine than all other rationalistic historians," proceeds to give the passage at length:—

"The main question was whether Christianity is the highest and absolute revelation of God, and such that by it in the Son of God the self-existent absolute being of God joins itself to man, and so communicates itself that man through the Son becomes truly one with God, and comes into

[1] *History of the Christian Religion in the West of Europe*, pp. 65–66.

[2] Russel also says: "The character of Athanasius has been portrayed with a vigorous hand and a masterly command by Gibbon." Yet Gibbon says of Athanasius: "He never lost the confidence of his friends, or the esteem of his enemies."

[3] [The quotation is from Milman's *Annals of St. Paul's*, p. 331.]

such community of essence with God, as makes him absolutely certain of pardon and salvation. From this point of view Athanasius apprehended the gist of the controversy, always finally summing up all his objections to the Arian doctrine with the chief argument, that the whole substance of Christianity, all reality of redemption, everything which makes Christianity the perfect salvation, would be utterly null and meaningless, if He who is supposed to unite man with God in real unity of being were not Himself absolute God, or of one substance with the absolute God, but only a creature among creatures. The infinite chasm which separates creature from Creator remains unfilled; there is nothing really mediatory between God and man, if between the two there be nothing more than some created and finite thing, or such a mediator and redeemer as the Arians conceive the Son of God in his essential distinction from God; not begotten from the essence of God and coeternal, but created out of nothing, and arising in time. Just as the distinctive character of the Athanasian doctrine lies in its effort to conceive the relation of the Father and Son, and in it the relation of God and man, as unity and community of essence, the Arian doctrine, on the contrary, has the opposite aim of a separation by which, first Father and Son, and then God and man, are placed in the abstract opposition of infinite and finite. While, therefore, according to Athanasius, Christianity is the religion of the unity of God and man, according to Arius the essence of the Christian revelation can consist only in man's becoming conscious of the difference which separates him, with all the finite, from the absolute being of God. What value, however, one must ask, has such a Christianity, when, instead of bringing man nearer to God, it only fixes the chasm between God and man?"[1]

According to this view, then, the doctrine of Athanasius, the doctrine, that is, of the Church, whether it be formulated perfectly or not, contains the essence of Christianity, the doctrine of Arius does not.

With particular reference to the ὁμοούσιος, which expresses the orthodox doctrine, not in contradistinction to Sabellianism,

[1] [Schaff's quotation is from *Die Christliche Kirche vom 4–6ten Jahrhundert*, p. 97 sq.]

but in contradistinction to the views which it was designed to condemn, Dr. Cunningham remarks that it "acted like Ithuriel's spear in detecting all their shifts and manœuvres" (of Arians and Semi-Arians), "and in holding them up to the world as opposers, whatever they might sometimes pretend, of the true and proper Divinity of the Son of God and the Saviour of sinners. It was like the anchor that held the orthodox faith in steadiness and safety amid the fearful storms of more than half a century, which elapsed between the first and the second ecumenical councils. . . . The Lord blessed it, and made it the means of preserving His truth when it was exposed to imminent danger; and it continues to this day, in the symbolical books of almost all orthodox churches, to be regarded as a precise and accurate exponent of the great doctrine of our Lord's true and proper Divinity."[1]

After these general remarks on the controversy, let us consider the teaching of Arius more nearly. He shared the well-known opinion held by Philo, that it is inconsistent with the majesty and glory of the everlasting God to come into immediate contact with the material world. Accordingly, it being the will of God that the world should be created, He first begat, or made (both terms were used), an intermediate being (*ἕνα τινά*) to execute His purpose. This intermediate being is not begotten of the Father in the sense that he is of the Father's essence; for, if he had been begotten in this sense, he could not have been the Father's agent in the creation of the world. As, then, he was neither begotten of the Divine substance, nor formed out of matter, which, according to the theory, did not yet exist, he was made out of nothing: *ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων ὑπέστη*.[2]

This intermediate being, who pre-exists, and is above, as he

[1] [*Historical Theology*, chap. ix. sec. ii. We may add a passage from Dr. Hatch. "A reaction," he says, speaking of the time of the Arian controversy, "took place against the multiplicity of the terms" (used in connection with the doctrine of the Trinity); "but the simple and unstudied language of the childhood of Christianity, with its awe-struck sense of the ineffable nature of God, was but a fading memory, and, on the other hand, the tendency to trust in and insist upon the result of speculation was strong."—*Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages on the Christian Church*, p. 279. See other passages in the same work.]

[2] Hence Arians were called "Exukontians," as well as Heteroousians and Anomœans.

is before, all other creatures, was not made in time, but he had a beginning; he is not eternal in the absolute sense: ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν ["there was when he did not exist."][1] Though the image of the Father, and worthy of being called Logos, or Wisdom, and even, in an inferior sense, God, he is not infinite in his attributes. He is, indeed, perfectly holy, but not because absolute unchangeableness could be predicated of him, but because of the perfect use he made of his own free-will and of the Father's grace. On the ground of his foreseen perseverance in good, he was called the "Son of God" before his birth. It is a moral, not a metaphysical sonship, which belongs to him; and so, also, when he is called God, he receives that name as the glorious reward of his virtue.[2] According to this system, we have in Christ Jesus an incarnate demi-God. His true humanity is not saved; for, instead of the reasonable soul, we have that middle being, begotten of the Father before time, though out of nothing—a metaphysical creation, meant to save the majesty of the absolute God, in which not only orthodox divines, but those who sympathise with the Dynamic Monarchians recognise the Achilles heel of the system.

Let us now look at the arguments put forward on its behalf.

1. Arius and his followers drew their scriptural proofs from such passages as speak of Christ's growing in wisdom and in favour with God and man; of His being wearied, His hungering and thirsting, His being troubled in spirit, His praying and weeping; from such (including those that speak of His exaltation as the reward of His virtue) as appear to limit His knowledge and power when His manhood was matured; and, not least, from such as speak, or seem to speak, of Him as created or made.[3]

[1] ["He intentionally avoided saying ἦν χρόνος, αἰῶν ὅτε, for he unquestionably supposed that the Logos was produced by the Father before all time; the conceptions of time and of creation being, according to his opinion, inseparably connected."—Neander, *Church Hist.*, vol. iv. p. 4.]

[2] μιτόχῃ καὶ οὗτος ἐθεοποιήθη.

[3] I might quote a number of passages under these different heads, but it is unnecessary. Take two or three examples:

1. For His subordination:—"My Father is greater than I" (John xiv. 28). Besides Heb. iii. 2, and i. 3, and Phil. ii. 5–11, there is the passage in

I may add that, in arguing from Scripture, both parties did so in the belief that the writers not only agreed in the substance of the faith, but were inspired in such a sense that all their expressions must harmonise.

2. The theological argument for Arianism may be very briefly stated. Arius set out from the idea of God as absolute, and, therefore, one. To him this idea necessarily involved this other, that all else that exists must fall under the category of the created. To allege that the Son is not a creation either involves a departure from Monotheism or leads to Sabellianism; for a plurality of persons in one God, unless "person" be taken in the Sabellian sense, is a contradiction in terms. A dread of Sabellianism, I may remark, was one of the causes in which Arianism originated.[1]

The Arians argued further that, if the generation of the Son was not an act of free-will, then God was under compulsion.[2]

I have already said that Arius appears to have been on

Ps. xlv., "Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows."

That holiness was not inherent in Christ is shown by such passages as "Why callest thou me good?" (Mark x. 18); "Say ye of Him whom the Father hath sanctified" (John x. 36); that He should be forsaken and yet be one with God is impossible, "This is life eternal, to know Thee the only true God" (John xvii. 3); "I and the Father are one" was interpreted by Arians of the will. Christ announces the forgiveness of sins, which is simply an act of Divine will.

2. For limitation of His power and knowledge:—"But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God is come unto you" (Matt. xii. 28; John xi. 34; Matt. xvi. 13; Mark xiii. 32—which certainly offers a serious difficulty).

3. For His being created, or made:—Prov. viii. 22—"The Lord created me (κύριος ἔκτισέ με— קָנָנִי) in the beginning of His way, before His works of old (ἀρχὴν ὁδῶν αὐτοῦ εἰς ἔργα αὐτοῦ);" Col. i. 15—πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως—not πρωτόκτιστος: some translate "begotten before the whole creation;" Heb. i. 4: κρείττων γινόμενος τῶν ἀγγέλων, presupposing, it was alleged, that he also was a creature. The answer of course is that the clause occurs in immediate connection with the words, "when he had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high;" Acts ii. 36.

[1] In Sabellianism there was Synæresis (denial of personal distinction); in Arianism, Diæresis (affirmation of personal distinction carried to the denial of consubstantiality).

[2] In answer to this, Athanasius, arguing from the attributes of God, said that the necessity was in, and not above, God (τὸ κατὰ φύσιν).

good terms with his ecclesiastical superiors till the outbreak of the controversy that bears his name. It ought to be noticed, however, that he is commonly believed to have been connected with the Meletian schism. Meletius had sacrificed in time of persecution, and, having been removed from his office by a synod over which Peter, Bishop of Alexandria, presided, he not only refused to submit, but claimed and exercised the right of ordaining to the office of which he had been himself deprived. This schism was not healed even by the Council of Nice, which came to a decision on the subject that was lenient, but not favourable to the separatists. According to Theodoret, the sect still existed in the fifth century, and was noted for certain foolish practices, "as lustrations with clapping of hands, dancing with the tinkling of little bells." Now, there are undoubtedly passages in letters written by Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria, that seem to represent Arius as a follower of Meletius, but the probability is that all that is meant is that he resembled Meletius in his stubborn and defiant resistance to episcopal authority. Were it a fact that he was at one time excommunicated with the other Meletians, we can hardly imagine that the early ecclesiastical historians, who were strongly prejudiced against Arius, would have failed to state it with unmistakable distinctness. Thus Theodoret tells us—and this is the first thing he tells about Arius—that he hoped to be elected metropolitan on the death of Achillas. "He fell a prey to uncontrollable jealousy, when he saw that all the power of the priesthood was committed to Alexander. Under the influence of this passion he sought opportunities for dispute and contention, and although he perceived that Alexander's conduct was far above the reach of detraction, he could not subdue the envy by which he was tormented. The enemy of truth made use of him to plunge the Church into trouble by exciting him to oppose the apostolical doctrines held by Alexander."[1] If Arius had been previously known as a troubler of the Church, would not this writer have informed us plainly of the fact? Besides, it naturally occurs to one to ask: "How could Arius, if he had been excommunicated two or three years before, cherish the hope of being elevated to the metropolitan see?

[1 *Hist. Eccles.* i. 2.]

How could the election of another cause him such bitter disappointment?" Whatever the secret feelings of the parties may have been, we know of no rupture between them till about the year 320 A.D. It then became known to the Bishop that Arius was disturbing men's faith in the supreme Divinity of the Son. Private remonstrances had no effect. A public conference of the clergy, in which Alexander and Arius spoke at length, was equally unavailing. Then followed a pastoral, signed by numerous presbyters and deacons, as well as by the Bishop; and, at length, in 321 A.D., a provincial synod of Egyptian and Libyan bishops, to the number of one hundred, condemned the teaching of Arius and excommunicated and anathematised both him and his followers. Among the followers were two bishops, Secundus of Ptolemais and Theonas of Marmorica. How many synods, in Egypt and out of Egypt, followed in the history of this controversy, some orthodox, others heterodox, all excommunicating and anathematising, one binding what another had loosed, and loosing what another had bound! The conflict was only beginning; it was soon to be world-wide. It was not the first time, as has been remarked, that, when a storm arose in Egypt, the waves dashed on remote shores. Arius, driven from Alexandria, circulated his doctrines in Palestine and far and wide over Asia Minor. He wrote and discoursed. To diffuse and popularise his tenets he made use of verse as well as prose, particularly in a work called the *Thalcia* ("Banquet"), which is described as having been half the one and half the other. From this work, it is said, his followers were wont to sing at meal-times. As his great adversary testified, he composed songs for sailors and millers and travellers and so disseminated his views.

Although Alexander wrote letter after letter, that the door might be shut against him, Arius was received with favour by many who did not altogether adopt his views. He was recognised, not only by individual prelates, but by a Bithynian synod, and the amount of sympathy shown him by the two distinguished bishops who bore the name of Eusebius—Eusebius of Nicomedia and Eusebius of Cæsarea—especially by the former, an old fellow-scholar of Arius, was so great that some writers, without hesitation, rank them both among his followers. Efforts were made to effect a

reconciliation, but in vain. A long letter written by Alexander to his namesake, the Bishop of Byzantium, is preserved by Theodoret. It traces the heresy to those Monarchians of the previous century who had denied the supreme Divinity of the Son, and had been condemned by the Church, and denounces it in such terms as to show that the restoration of Arius, unless he made a humble recantation, was hopeless. No less a personage than the Emperor himself, now triumphant over Licinius, and master of the east, made an attempt to restore peace and unity, treating the dispute at first as a trivial logomachy, which, though it had already caused widespread distraction, might be stopped by his letter and by the exhortations of his messenger, the famous Hosius, Bishop of Cordova.[1] About the end of 324, Hosius held a council, the result of which was to convince him that the controversy had gone too far to be allayed by advice, even from the Emperor.

Constantine had set up in front of his palace his own picture, surrounded by a cross, and having below it a dragon stricken through with a dart; but soon he learned that the adversary whose destruction was expressed by that emblem, had power to vex and waste the Church after its ungodly persecutors were plunged into the abyss. Bishops were now coming into violent collision with bishops, and flock with flock—almost, says the Emperor's biographer, like the Symplegades. For there were other "virulent disorders" by which the Church was suffering, and in which the working of the "secret adversary" might be seen. There were the Meletian schism, and, still more widely felt, the dispute as to the proper time for the observance of Easter. Constantine, according to the Bishop of Cæsarea, appears to be the only one on earth capable of being God's minister for the good end of healing those differences. Whether he held a previous consultation with one or more of the bishops is not stated by Eusebius or by any of the earliest authorities, but he made his *vicennalia* for ever memorable by summoning, in virtue of the authority that belonged to him as Emperor, an ecumenical council to be held at Nice in the month of June.

The name "ecumenical" is indicative of the new era. It

[1] Hosius was at this time about sixty-seven years of age. He had been thirty years bishop, and had "confessed" in the persecution of Maximian.

had been applied to none of the councils of the past, though some of them, like the council of Arles, or that of Antioch, by which Paul of Samorata was condemned, had been entitled to it. Now the Christians scattered over the inhabited earth (*οἰκουμένη*) found an organ for the manifestation of their unity and the settlement of questions in which all were concerned. It was a goal reached after long struggle and trial. Imperial favour gave an opportunity for exhibiting that oneness the consciousness of which had been in great part maintained and deepened by imperial hostility and violence. But, while this council was a goal, it was also a starting-point, as it was the first of a series of councils in which the doctrine of the Church concerning the Trinity and the persons of the Trinity was formulated.

In the city, then, which, as the historian reminds us, derives its name from victory, "they who, not in soul only, but in body and country and place and nation, were far removed from one another, were brought together, as it were a great chaplet of priests, variegated with beauteous flowers." "The house of prayer[1] contained within it at once Syrians and Cilicians, and Phœnicians and Arabians, and those of Palestine; those, moreover, of Egypt, Thebais, Libya, and those who came from Mesopotamia. A Persian bishop, too, was present at the synod; nor was a Scythian wanting to the number. Pontus, Galatia, and Pamphylia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Phrygia furnished their most distinguished prelates; while those who dwelt in the remotest districts of Thrace and Macedonia, of Achaia and Epirus, were, notwithstanding, in attendance. Even from Spain itself one whose fame was widely spread took his seat (as an individual) in the great assembly. The prelate of the imperial city was prevented from attending by extreme old age, but his presbyters were present and supplied his place; in short, a similitude of that which happened in the apostles' age, when devout men were gathered from every nation under heaven."[2]

The number of bishops, we are told, exceeded two hundred and

[1] The Council seems to have met sometimes in a church, and sometimes in the Emperor's house, which is frequently called the palace. The imperial residence, however, was at Nicomedia, twenty-one miles distant.

[2] [*De Vitâ Constantini*, iii. 8.]

fifty. The exact number usually given is three hundred and eighteen,[1] and it rests on good authority. A special ornament of that first great council was the presence of many who bore in their body the marks of the Lord Jesus, among whom not the least distinguished was Paphnutius, who had lost his right eye. Paphnutius deserves to be remembered. He was not only a noble-minded, but a sober-minded martyr. At a transition time, when the ascetic spirit was rapidly developing itself—when pallor and leanness were regarded by many as signs of sanctity, and when the feeling against the married clergy was becoming more intense and intolerant—he set forth the danger of abridging the liberty which had been enjoyed in former times, and, though he had himself been brought up among monks, and had continued unmarried, he, by wise and powerful speech, prevented the council from enacting cruel and demoralising laws in favour of celibacy.

The description in Eusebius of the formal opening of the council, which took place on the 14th of June, is somewhat abridged by Schaff, who gives it as follows:—

"After all the bishops had entered the central building of the royal palace, on the sides of which very many seats were prepared, each took his place with becoming modesty, and silently awaited the arrival of the Emperor. The court officers entered one after another, though only such as professed faith in Christ. The moment the approach of the Emperor was announced by a given signal they all rose from their seats, and the Emperor appeared like a heavenly messenger (ἄγγελος) of God, covered with gold and gems, a glorious presence, very tall and slender, full of beauty, strength, and majesty. With this external adornment he united the spiritual ornament of the fear of God, modesty, and humility, which could be seen in his downcast eyes, his blushing face, the motion of his body, and his walk. When he reached the golden throne prepared for him, he stopped, and sat not down till the bishops gave him the sign. And after him they all resumed their seats." Then, after a few words of salutation from the bishop on his right hand, generally believed to have been Eusebius himself, the unbaptized Emperor formally opened the Council: "It was

[1] A mystic number, τιη (318) = the cross (τ) and Ἰησοῦς (Ιη). It was also the number of Abraham's servants (Gen. xiv. 14).

my highest wish, my friends, that I might be permitted to enjoy your assembly. I must thank God that, in addition to all other blessings, He has shown me this highest one of all, to see you all gathered here in harmony and with one mind. May no malicious enemy rob us of this happiness, and after the tyranny of the enemy of Christ [Licinius and his army] is conquered by the help of the Redeemer, the wicked demon shall not persecute the Divine law with new blasphemies. Discord in the Church I consider more fearful and painful than any other war. As soon as I, by the help of God, had overcome my enemies, I believed that nothing more was now necessary than to give thanks to God in common joy with those whom I had liberated. But when I heard of your division, I was convinced that this matter should by no means be neglected, and in the desire to assist by my service I have summoned you without delay. I shall, however, feel my desire fulfilled only when I see the minds of all united in that peaceful harmony which you, as the anointed of God, must preach to others. Delay not, therefore, my friends, delay not, servants of God; put away all causes of strife, and loose all knots of discord by the laws of peace. Thus shall you accomplish the work most pleasing to God, and confer on me, your fellow-servant, an exceeding great joy."[1]

He then gave way to the president of the Council, Hosius, who acted, however, say Roman Catholic writers, in the name of the absent Salvator, and with the Roman presbyters, Victor and Vincentius, at his side.

As regards the great controversy, the parties of which the council were composed are sometimes reckoned as three, sometimes, and more frequently, as four. Possibly, however, there was a very considerable number who could hardly be said to belong to any party, but waited till they perceived how the current was flowing, or, it may be, till they ascertained the mind of the Emperor, who, though he had given way to the ecclesiastical president, took an important part in the proceedings.

1. There were the decided Arians, who, with Arius himself at their head, contended openly that the Son was neither coeternal nor consubstantial with the Father. He was a creature: *ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν.*

[1] Schaff's *Church History*, vol. iii. p. 627.

2. The party which, though at first not the most numerous, eventually gained the ascendency, chiefly through the zeal and eloquence of a deacon, a young and small man, who had been private secretary to the Bishop Alexander, and who, it had been already whispered among the Arians, was the real foe they had to fight, the Bishop himself being only a man of straw. This party, the Athanasians, would be satisfied with no deliverance that hid the vital difference between themselves and the Arians.

3. The Eusebians, so called from the powerful Bishop of Nicomedia (afterwards of Constantinople). By those who make only three parties they are designated simply the Arians, but they are also designated Arianisers. It may be doing them no injustice to call them Arians, but they were not determined Arians. They did not declare themselves in terms bold and uncompromising, and were not prepared to share the lot of the excommunicated.[1]

4. The largest party, headed by Eusebius of Cæsarea. While they did not deny the proper Divinity of Christ, they were disposed, from a variety of motives, to adopt a creed which hid, but could not heal, the wound. Many of them were disciples of Origen, and desired no greater precision of statement than was found in his writings.

You may associate the four parties with four memorable names—Athanasius and Arius (neither of whom, however, though they were allowed and invited to speak, was a member of the council), representing the right and the left, and Eusebius of Cæsarea and Eusebius of Nicomedia, representing respectively the right and the left centre. The old fellow-scholar of Arius, and Bishop of the imperial residence, under whose influence very probably Constantine treated the controversy lightly when he sent his messenger to Alexandria, submitted a creed which has not been preserved, but which, as it was rejected with indignation by the orthodox party, must have contained expressions that could be interpreted only in a heretical sense. The chief aim of the Eusebians and the Arians was to have a confession drawn up in such

[1] Along with Eusebius of Nicomedia went Theognis of Nicæa, Maris of Chalcedon, and Menophantus of Ephesus, the places of whose sees were the seats of ecumenical councils.—SCHAFF.

language that both parties could find in it their own opinions. In the course of the discussions it was found that, though Arius himself had disapproved of the expression that the "Logos is ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ" ["of God"], in opposition to ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων ["from things that are not"], there was shown in the council a general willingness to accept the formula; for, it was said, after Paul, by those who did not admit the coeternity and consubstantiality, "all things are of God." When, further, it was said: "The Logos is the virtue of God, the eternal image the Father, perfectly like to the Father, immutable and true God," it was observed that the Eusebians (of them it is said particularly) exchanged signs among themselves, indicating that such language gave them no offence, for in Scripture man is called the image of God, the image and glory, and even the locusts are called "his power."[1] As to the word "immutable," which was used to exclude the Arian conception of Christ's nature as susceptible of change (τρεπτός), even it might be allowed to stand, for Paul says: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" ascribing to the believer a certain immutability, which, of course, does not come out of his nature.

It was scarcely possible to frame a creed that would ensure the end—that would decide the question really at issue—without having recourse to non-scriptural expressions, which, as Neander says, may be rendered necessary by new circumstances for the development and defence of biblical truth, while the fear of it may serve to hinder the refutation of doctrines that are unbiblical in their essence and spirit. Language that declared in a way that could not be avoided that the Son was eternally and essentially God was indispensable, unless the council deliberately meant, as a party in it desired, to leave the question open. That this was not the mind of the council was proved when the other Eusebius (Eusebius of Cæsarea, and the historian) submitted a creed which, far from being heretical, was, according to his own account—and there is no reason to doubt its truth, for we have the creed—listened to with universal approbation, but was not accepted because it had not the *lapis Lydius*—the *palladium*, as it has been also called—of the true faith. It

[1] LXX. ἡ δύναμίς μου; A.V. "my great army" [Joel ii. 25].

was pure as an angel, but that spear whose touch discovered the false was not in the angel's hand. I quote the most important part of it:—

"We believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, God of God, Light of Light, Life of Life, His only Son, the First-born of all creatures, begotten of the Father, beginning in eternity, before time was; by whom also everything was created, who became flesh for our redemption, who lived and suffered among men, rose again the third day, returned to the Father, and will come again one day in His glory to judge the living and the dead."

No one, the author tells us, disputed anything in this confession. The Emperor himself, he says, praised it very highly, and exhorted everybody to accept and sign it—only adding to it the word ὁμοούσιος ["of the same substance"]. That means that Hosius and others who had the Emperor's ear felt the necessity of such an addition. It had become known in the assembly that the Arians themselves, including those who leaned to Arianism, particularly Eusebius of Nicomedia, regarded the word ὁμοούσιος as not only unscriptural, but utterly irreconcilable with their doctrine. Eusebius of Nicomedia had stated this in a letter, and so, as Ambrose afterwards expressed it, an Arian had "drawn from the scabbard the sword by which the head of the Arian heresy was cut off." Then, says a writer already quoted, who again and again expresses his conviction that the fathers came to Nice to fight for fighting's sake, "the joy was great, all chance of peace was over, war was declared, the quarrel was found, and, as an historian has said, the contending parties fought in the dark about terms which no one understood." Immediately after we find this paragraph, containing a story that is often told, and which is told here so far correctly:—

"An incident, illustrating the simplicity of one person at least among the members of the council, is related by Socrates, its historian. He says that, at a moment when disputes were running so high that there seemed likely to be no end of controversy, a layman, whose person bore marks of having suffered mutilation for his Christian faith, suddenly stepped from among the combatants, and exclaimed: 'Christ and the apostles left us not a system of logic, but a naked truth, to be guarded by faith and good works.'" "But," it is

added, "neither then nor in any subsequent age has the world profited by this simple and truly Christian doctrine." [1]

Now Socrates expressly tells us that it was not in the general assembly of the Council, but in one of the preparatory logical contests, and when the disputants were causing disturbance, that this man of unsophisticated understanding spoke; that, moreover, all the hearers admired him; that the disputants themselves, after hearing him, exercised a far greater degree of moderation, and that thus the disturbance caused by their debate was suppressed.[2]

The creed of Eusebius of Nicomedia having been rejected as positively heretical, and that of Eusebius of Cæsarea as defective and futile, the fathers at length adopted a confession in which the crucial term was found. As to this term, according to Eusebius, the Emperor himself explained that "it did not signify that there was in God a corporeal substance, or that the Divine substance was divided and rent between several persons."

The confession of Nice runs thus:—

"We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Creator of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Only-begotten of the Father, of the substance (ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας) of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of the same substance with the Father (ὁμοούσιον τῷ Πατρί), by whom all things were made in heaven and in earth, who for us men and our salvation came down from heaven, was incarnate, was made man, suffered, rose again the third day, ascended into the heavens, and will come to judge the living and the dead. And in the Holy Ghost." [3]

To this, the confession proper, there was originally affixed a sentence which subsequently dropped out: "Those who say there was a time when He was not, and He was not before He was begotten, and He was made of nothing (ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων ἐγένετο), or who say that he is of another hypostasis or of another substance, or that the Son of God is created, or

[1] Earl Russel [*History of the Christian Religion in the West of Europe*, p. 72] refers to Stanley's *Eastern Church*, but Stanley is inaccurate.

[2] Socrates I. ch. viii.

[3] "And in the Holy Ghost:" this was supplemented by the Constantinopolitan creed of 381 A.D.

mutable, or subject to change (τρεπτὸν ἢ ἀλλοιωτόν), the Catholic Church anathematises."

Although we know who had greatest influence in the deliberations of the council, it is impossible to say who had the greatest share in the composition of the formula. Some have ascribed it chiefly to Hosius, some to Athanasius, and some to the deacon Hermogenes, afterwards Bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, the secretary of the council, by whom the formula was read. The Emperor preferred to regard it as a revelation from the Holy Spirit dwelling in His holy servants, and he threatened with banishment any who would not sign it. All the bishops, beginning with Hosius, who was immediately followed by the two Roman presbyters, acting for their bishop, did sign it with the exception of two. Several, however, adhibited their names with reluctance. Eusebius of Cæsarea took a day to consider. He yielded and sent home a defence of himself, which is not generally regarded as entirely successful. Eusebius of Nicomedia and Theognis of Nicæa—"disguising themselves in sheepskins while they were really wolves," says Theodoret—subscribed the creed without the anathema. It is usually stated that for this "they were deposed and for a time banished." The deposition and banishment, however, did not follow immediately, and it appears from a letter of Constantine himself that they were condemned afterwards because they had not recognised the deposition of Arius and certain of his followers, but had admitted them to Christian fellowship. But the threat of banishment against the two old and constant friends of Arius, the bishops Secundus and Theonas, who persisted in their refusal to sign, was immediately put into execution. They were anathematised and excommunicated, and were banished along with Arius to Illyria. At the same time, orders were given that the books of Arius and his friends should be burned. Disobedience to ecclesiastical decisions was now regarded as a crime against the State.

The council seems to have waived all inquiry into the original charges brought against Meletus of Lycopolis, and to have dealt with him simply as a schismatic. It was decided that Meletus should remain in his city, but without any authority, or the power of ordaining; and that, as to those

who had already been ordained by him, it was necessary to lay hands on them again that they might be restored to their office and honours, but that, when restored, they should always take rank after the clergy ordained by Alexander.[1]

The third canon of the Council of Nice has been interpreted by Roman Catholics as enjoining the celibacy of the clergy. This is contrary to what is related by the most ancient historians of Paphnutius—that he prevented the Council from passing a law requiring all in holy orders who had been married at the time of their ordination to separate from their wives. Nice did not adopt the law previously enacted at the provincial synod of Illiberis, but merely accepted the principle that whoever had taken holy orders before marriage ought not to be married afterwards. Further, it appears from decisions of later councils that even this law was applicable only to bishops and priests. Deacons, who were not, however, included among the higher servants of the Church by the Greeks, were allowed to marry after their ordination if they had previously obtained the sanction of their bishop. It is needful to add only that the vows of the canon admit of an interpretation consistent with what is known to have been tolerated in the Greek Church in the past, and what is more than tolerated, and more than encouraged, by that Church at the present day. "It is a startling sight to the traveller," says Dean Stanley, "after long wanderings in the south of Europe, to find himself, amongst the mountains of Greece or Asia Minor, once more under the roof of a married pastor, and see the table of the parish priest furnished, as it might be in Protestant England or Switzerland, by the hands of an acknowledged wife. The bishops, indeed, being selected from the monasteries, are single. But the parochial clergy—that is, the whole body of clergy as such—though they cannot marry after their ordination, must always be married before they enter on their office."[2]

Canon 15 forbade the translation of a bishop, priest, or deacon from one church to another. But, though this prohibition, based, doubtless, on the view of ordination as con-

[1] Sixth Canon. Alexandria is here spoken of before Antioch, and even before Rome.

[2] [*Eastern Church*, p. 41.]

sisting of a mystical marriage, was renewed in 341 A.D. by the Synod of Antioch, yet in the east, so early as 382 A.D., Gregory of Nazianzus reckoned it among those laws that had long been abrogated by custom.

I shall mention, further, only the nineteenth canon, and I mention it in connection with controversies we have already considered. It enjoined that the followers of Paul of Samosata that desired to return to the Catholic Church should be rebaptized. The canon was adopted on the ground that, though the Samosatans named the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in administering baptism, yet the words "Son" and "Holy Ghost" were not employed by them in the usual sense, and that consequently the rite could not be regarded as valid.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE ARIAN CONTROVERSY AFTER THE COUNCIL OF NICE.

BUT it is not for its canons, but for its creed, that Nice must be for ever memorable. It is a creed more widely known and acknowledged and sung than any other, not even the Apostles' Creed excepted; it is a creed which, though it has a dark side not only for enemies but for friends, is nevertheless a pillar of fire, and a guiding pillar too, for the Church, which had seen its persecutors and oppressors carried away as with a flood; it is a creed which, while it deals with a mystery that overflows all human formulas and all human speech, yet in simple and weighty words which have touched millions through fifteen centuries, struggles to express, and does most plainly testify, that He was the very God who was manifested for our redemption. And if any man is to be honoured above the rest of his brethren as able to vindicate, and ready to die for, that great truth, it was not any one of the great assembly: it was the impassioned and eloquent, the devout and loving, the heroic and apostolic man who had been the secretary, and became the successor, of Alexander. From the days of him who founded Alexandria no one whose name is associated with that city has filled a wider space in the eyes of men than Athanasius. There was a hard warfare yet to wage; the victory was by no means complete till some years after his death. But, anticipating the final triumph, the American historian thus writes concerning the Council of which Athanasius was the soul and the ornament: "Upon the bed of lava grows the sweet fruit of the vine. The wild passions and the weaknesses of men, which encompassed the Nicene Council, are extinguished, but the faith in the eternal deity of Christ has remained, and so long as this faith lives, the Council of Nicæa will be named with reverence and with gratitude."[1]

[1] [Schaff, *Church History*, vol. ii. p. 631.]

When sentence was passed on Arius and his adherents and his books, the victory was by no means decided. The Emperor himself, who had probably never understood fully the meaning and importance of the controversy, did not continue stedfast in his adherence to the ὁμοούσιον. Influenced by Eusebius of Cæsarea, and by his sister Constantia, who had been gained by a powerful party at Court, chiefly by her confessor, he expressed himself satisfied with a confession that Arius had drawn up in general expressions, and recalled him from banishment.[1] But Athanasius, who had meanwhile become Bishop of Alexandria (328 A.D.),[2] refused to receive Arius again into the fellowship of the Church, and thus drew upon himself the displeasure of Constantine, giving his enemies, at the same time, a favourable opportunity for compassing his overthrow by intrigue and calumny. Not only Arians and Semi-Arians, but many Meletians and apostates and pagans, were ready to testify against him. Having refused to appear before a council held at Alexandria in 334 A.D., he was summoned before another Eusebian council at Tyre in the year following (335 A.D.). Athanasius came, having been formally commanded to appear by the Emperor, who had written him a letter threatening him with deposition and banishment if he should refuse to receive Arius. He was accompanied by forty-nine bishops of his own party. The accusations against him having broken down, some of them in a way most shameful to the accusers, the synod sent to Alexandria a commission charged to inquire into certain acts of violence which Athanasius was reported to have committed in the administration of his diocese. The commissioners, in spite of all protests, would listen only to those who had accusations to make; they had no ear for such as were prepared to refute them. Accordingly, when these messengers returned with their report, the Metropolitan of Alexandria was condemned and deposed, being forbidden even to reside in his own city, lest his presence there might occasion new disturbances.[3] In vain did Athanasius repair to Constan-

[1] Eusebius of Nicomedia and Theognis were also recalled.

[2] Though simply a deacon he was raised to the bishopric in accordance with the demand of the people, the dying Alexander making the nomination.

[3] The Egyptian bishops, who remained at Tyre during the investigations, pro-

tinople with the view of obtaining redress from the Emperor. Moved in great part by the groundless charge that he had kept the corn in Egypt—that is, had stopped the allowance of public corn made to the clergy and to widows and virgins at Constantinople[1]—he banished him, in 336 or 335 A.D., to Treves. The synod that condemned Athanasius at Tyre had by this time removed to Jerusalem, and now, after having been present at the consecration of the church built there by the Emperor, it removed, at Constantine's instance, the sentence of excommunication from Arius.[2]

The Emperor, however, so far yielded to the representations of Athanasius that he required the members of the synod to repair from Jerusalem to the capital. According to Athanasius, there appeared there only a delegation of which the Eusebians were sure. Pursuing their victory, and completing a process for heresy which had been begun at Jerusalem, they deposed and excommunicated Marcellus of Ancyra, who, when attacking Arian opinions, had, with a rashness not unusual in polemical writing, used expressions tainted with Sabellianism, and orders were given that his books should be burned.[3] On the other hand, it was resolved that the decision of Jerusalem in favour of Arius should be followed up, and that his readmission to the fellowship of the Church should be solemnly celebrated in Constantinople. The day before that fixed for the celebration, Alexander, bishop of the capital, who was true to the Nicene creed, is said to have betaken himself to the church, and, kneeling down, to have prayed thus: "If Arius is to be received to-morrow, take me first out of this world; but if Thou wilt have pity, abandon not Thine inheritance to sin and shame, and take Arius away, that heresy and impiety may not enter in."[4] That same day Arius died

tested against the commission—the conspiracy, as they called it—which was headed by Ischyras, and the orthodox clergy of Alexandria and of the province of Mareotis sent letters of protest.

Athanasius had gone home before the return of the commission.

[1] Sozomen.

[2] The Emperor wrote certifying the orthodoxy of Arius, introducing at the end of his letter the confession of faith with which he had been satisfied.

[3] According to Marcellus, there was no Son before the Incarnation; before the creation, no Logos except potentially (δύναμει).

[4] The bishop was accompanied by two presbyters. The prayer is reported by Athanasius.

suddenly, probably from an attack of cholera, but, according to some of his friends, from poison; according to others of his friends, by sorcery; and, according to many of his opponents, by the immediate judgment of God. Others have ascribed his death to his unbounded transports over his final triumph. Alexander celebrated the praises of God, not, as we are told, because he rejoiced in the death of Arius, but because he saw in this event the righteous judgment of God.

In the following year (337 A.D.) Constantine died, but, though shortly after their accession his three sons agreed to recall the banished bishops, and Athanasius came back to Alexandria,[1] where, according to one of the fathers, he was received more joyously than ever an Emperor was, his enemies renewed their intrigues against him, and even placed at his side, as bishop of the Arians in Alexandria, Pistus, an old friend of his deceased adversary. Whatever he may have expected on his way from Treves, home was no haven for him. At a synod attended by above eighty bishops, there was adopted a paper, which took the form of a circular, in which he not only vindicated the Nicene faith, but found it necessary to justify himself from the fresh accusations brought against him. But the Eusebians were powerful. Their leader, formerly of Nicomedia, was now, notwithstanding the council of Nice, Bishop of Constantinople; and notwithstanding the agreement come to with his brothers to recall the banished bishops, Constantius, who ruled in the East, was a fanatical Arian. At a synod held at Antioch in 341 A.D., Athanasius, seemingly on the alleged ground that he had reinstated himself in his see without the sanction of an ecclesiastical assembly, was again deposed. At this council there were no fewer than four creeds adopted, or at least approved, none of which, while they rejected certain Arian as well as certain Sabellian propositions, explicitly asserted the absolute eternity and consubstantiality of the Son.[2]

Not only was Athanasius deposed by the council of

[1] Bringing with him a letter from Constantine II., in which it was said that Constantine I. had banished him only to withdraw him from the sanguinary hands of his enemies.

[2] The third confession, however, states, not only that the Son was begotten before all time, but that He has always coexisted with the Father as a real hypostasis.

Antioch, but a bishop was chosen in his place. This was Gregory of Cappadocia, who, with the help of the governor of Alexandria, took forcible possession of the diocese during the celebration of Easter, and compelled Athanasius to flee. After writing an eloquent circular, in which he protested against his violent ejection, Athanasius sought refuge with the man who was best able to help him, and with whom he was sure of finding a cordial reception—Julius, Bishop of Rome; and to this friend he came, attended by followers who presented to that country a spectacle altogether new—two monks.

In the west he was revered as a saint and a martyr.

After a smaller synod, held at Rome,[1] had pronounced in favour of Athanasius, the two Emperors,[2] Constantius, who ruled in the east, and Constans, who ruled in the west, summoned the council of Sardica,[3] which was presided over by Hosius, and which, besides adopting some important canons, to be noticed afterwards, reaffirmed the doctrinal decision of Nice, and recognised Athanasius as the rightful Bishop of Alexandria. From this synod, however, which was attended by very many bishops, their number being variously estimated from 170 to 300, the Arians, chiefly orientals, detached themselves, holding a council of their own at Philippopolis, where they declared their adherence to the decisions of the council of Antioch. They signed the fourth confession of that council, but renewed the excommunication of Athanasius, Marcellus, and Paul, who had been allowed to take their seats at Sardica. They even excommunicated Julius and Hosius. Constantius, influenced by the decision of Sardica, and still more by his brother Constans,[4] sought to allay the flames by restoring Athanasius and several other

[1] Although some of their members had undertaken to support their views at a synod to be called at Rome by Julius, the Eusebians had excused themselves from attending.

[2] Constantine II. had been slain by his brother Constans at Aquileia in 340 A.D.

[3] Date probably 347 A.D. Hefele gives 343. [*Conciliengesch*, ii. p. 535.]

[4] Constantius being at war with the Persians, his brother seized the occasion as favourable for bringing him to his views. Athanasius says that Constantius had previously ordered the governor of Alexandria to watch the ports that he might have him executed if he presented himself. The rival Bishop, Gregory, the Cappadocian, was killed in a popular rising.

bishops to their sees. He even gave Athanasius a gracious reception at Constantinople when he was on his return, and commended him, by a letter written by his own hand, to the civil and ecclesiastical courts as a man of God, who had never been forsaken in his trials, and whose orthodoxy and holy walk were generally known.

But scarcely had two years passed after the Bishop's restoration, when, on the death of Constans in the west (350 A.D.), a new tempest burst forth. He was accused, without the slightest foundation, of, among other things, an understanding with the usurper Magnentius, the murderer of Constans. A synod was held at Arles (353 A.D.), which Constantius attended in person, and at which his violence and threats had such effect that all the bishops, with the exception of one, signed the condemnation of Athanasius. The one who refused to sign was Paulinus of Treves, and he was banished to Phrygia, where he died. At the synod of Milan, convened at the request of Liberius of Rome, and held two years later, the result was similar, but there were found more than one faithful among the faithless. There were several who could not quiet their conscience and comfort their minds with the base consolation that the condemnation of Athanasius did not touch the doctrine of the man, but only his person. The number included Eusebius of Vercelli, Hilary of Poictiers, Lucifer of Cagliari, Dionysius of Milan (in whose place was put a bishop named Auxentius, who did not know a word of Latin), Hosius of Cordova, now above a hundred years of age, and Liberius of Rome, who, though he had not been present, was required to concur with the resolutions.[1] They were all banished, and Paulus of Constantinople was murdered. As for Athanasius, the church was surrounded by five thousand men when it was crowded with worshippers, who were celebrating a nocturnal festival. As the soldiers entered, he gave out the 136th Psalm, and the people joined in the refrain, "And His mercy endureth for ever." When they were advancing to seize him, some of his friends carried him off unperceived among the dispersing congregation, and "as a

[1] Hosius, also, seems to have been absent, and to have been required to sign.

bird escaped out of the snare of the fowler," he literally hastened to the wilderness from the windy storm and tempest, but not to be at rest—save as he had been wont to rest, by staying himself upon his God.

For five or six years Athanasius lived in danger of capture and death, flying from cell to cell, and from cave to cave, but finding time to write in defence of the truth and for the comfort of its persecuted friends. Old Hosius gave way after a year, and Liberius after two years, but Athanasius still trusted in Him who could say: "Hitherto, and no further." As it had been to too great an extent with the Christians generally, so it was particularly with the Arians: when they were triumphant throughout the Empire, they turned their weapons against one another. I have not gone, and do not mean to go, into details as to the synods that were held in this reign. Ammianus Marcellinus, the pagan historian, complained that these synods caused the greatest confusion and inconvenience. They deranged the postal service. "The highways," he said, "were constantly covered with galloping bishops."

The extreme party, the decided Arians, headed at this time by Eunomius, who was for a while bishop of Cyzicus, Acacius of Cæsarea, Eudoxius, afterwards of Antioch, and the deacon Aetius, who had been a physician in that same city,[1] boldly opposed their ἑτερούσιον ["of different substance"], and even their ἀνόμοιον ["unlike"] to the ὁμοούσιον ["of the same substance"] of the Nicene party and the ὁμοιούσιον ["of like substance"] of the more moderate, and the larger party, among the heterodox. That party was now represented by Basil of Ancyra and Gregory of Laodicea, Eusebius of Nicomedia having died before the council of Sardica. A third party, headed by Valens, Bishop of Mursa in Pontus, a mean, obsequious, and even servile man, and Ursacius, Bishop of Singidunum in Moesia,[2] and favoured by the court, strove to effect a compromise by dropping the οὐσία ["essence"]

[1] According to Aetius, the Son was not begotten. He was created, but had the power of creating, which constituted His divinity. This extreme party was called the "Eunomians."

[2] Their object was to hide from Constantius the difference between the Anomœans (those who held that the Son was "unlike in essence" to the Father) and the Semi-Arians.

altogether, representing that it was not in Scripture, and using only the word ὅμοιος ["like."] . This proposal was adopted at the second synod of Sirmium (357 A.D.), and the declaration of that synod was accepted by Hosius[1] and Liberius, who were worn out by their banishment. Liberius, indeed, as we see from his letter to Valens, even concurred in condemning Athanasius. But even when κατὰ πάντα ["in all things"] was added at the third synod of Sirmium (358 A.D.), and confirmed at some subsequent synods,[2] the division was not healed. On the contrary, the breach between Arians and Semi-Arians became wider, and, as a natural consequence, there was a gradual approximation between the latter party and the adherents of the Nicene faith.

So it continued under Julian (361 A.D.), who tolerated all Christian parties, trusting that by their disputes and mutual animosities they would furnish abundant proof of the untenableness of their religion. He made an exception, however. Athanasius, who had returned to Alexandria, instead of promoting the pagan reaction there by his perverse, disputatious zeal for an unintelligible dogma, converted and baptized many pagans, both men and women, and once more he was banished —now as an enemy of the gods. Recalled by Jovian (363 A.D.) he laboured, or rather continued to labour, for the restoration of the peace of the Church.

[1] Who died in the following year, bitterly repenting his weakness.

[2] Earlier in the same year, a synod, convoked by Basilius, had been held at Ancyra. [It asserted the "resemblance of essence" in opposition to the Nicene confession and to the doctrine of the Eunomians.]

At the third synod of Sirmium the ὁμοιούσιον was declared, Liberius of Rome becoming a Semi-Arian as easily as he had become an Arian; but before the fathers left, the new formula (dropping the οὐσία) was adopted as a basis for union—to be used at subsequent synods.

Ursacius and Valens, preventing the calling of an ecumenical council, brought it about that the orientals should meet in Seleucia, the occidentals in Ariminum (Rimini). The council of Ariminum, which was presided over by Restitutus of Carthage, and was attended by eight hundred bishops, eighty of whom were Arians, reaffirmed (359 A.D.) the decision of Nice, but their delegates capitulated. [Ten bishops had been sent from each council as a deputation to the Emperor to lay the proposed confessions before him.] The end was the same with the synod of Seleucia. The final decision of these councils, which was confirmed by the council of Constantinople in the following year (360 A.D.), was that the Son is ὅμοιος κατὰ πάντα, καθὼς λέγουσι αἱ γραφαί, "in all things" satisfying the Semi-Arians, and, "as say the Scriptures," satisfying the Arians.

And there soon came what was needed to bring about a complete reconciliation between the Semi-Arians and the adherents of the Nicene creed—the persecuting fury of the Arian Emperor Valens (364–378 A.D.) which was directed against both parties. For the fifth time Athanasius was banished (367 A.D.) He lived among the tombs, hidden, according to his own account, in his father's grave; but the people of Alexandria this time demanded his recall with such determination and vehemence that the Emperor, fearing the outbreak of a revolt, was constrained to yield. Athanasius returned with strength unbroken, though with a body spare through fasting and vigils, and laboured as before, bearing on his heart his own flock and the whole Church of Christ. He was fresh and elastic at threescore and ten. And when the day came on which he who had been separated from his people so often was to be separated from them for ever, they who had long admired and revered sorrowed, for they knew that within that breast of iron there dwelt a heart of love, and that within that loving heart—in his heart of hearts—He reigned supreme whose Name he had exalted among men.

Athanasius died in 373 A.D. Little could he have foreseen, when acting among his playfellows, after the manner of many another boy, the part of a clergyman, and acting it with such native propriety and dignity that Alexander, happening to observe him, resolved to have him educated for the sacred office—little could he have foreseen then what an illustrious part he was destined to play in history. It is a grand spectacle—from the nature of the thing a rare one—to see a man like an Athanasius or a Hildebrand, though we may not sympathise so much with the one as with the other, and though we may not have full sympathy with either—a man who, with no advantages of birth or of fortune, but with unbending will and singleness of aim, conducts a world-wide movement, and, patient and hopeful amid discouragements, struggles, and sufferings, finally achieves the victory.

And yet we wish that the noble man who boldly questioned the right and power of emperors when it was exercised against the Nicene creed, and was not afraid to denounce Constantius as a Pharaoh and an Ahab, had not remained silent when the father of Constantius poured undignified

invective on the head of Arius and sentenced him and his adherents to banishment and their books to the fire. The employment of force against theological opponents was an evil of unspeakable magnitude, the guilt of which lies heavily, not only on emperors, but on the Church, and on all parties in the Church. But lately she had been as a woman desolate and forsaken, who, like her Lord, had not where to lay her head, and no sooner is she brought into a wealthy place—no sooner do the sons of them that afflicted her come bending to her—than her own sons begin to afflict one another. Exalted to heaven, she knew not, at least as she ought to have known, the things that belonged to her peace. And what an appalling danger—great even when the secular arm is not invoked, and greater far when it is—that of mistaking a form of sound words for true religion! It was a danger which Athanasius himself escaped, but to which, as affecting multitudes, his eyes were not sufficiently open. And where was this danger greatest? Where were theological disputes conducted with greatest vehemence and greatest subtlety but in Alexandria, Asia Minor, Palestine—around the shores of the Mediterranean, where stood the cradle of the Church's young vigorous life? And what has become of those communities, the girdle of pearls with which the Lord had surrounded that glorious sea? Only some miserable traces of them are left. We cannot think that they would have been thus abandoned had they clung to their first love as ardently as they contended about points of doctrine.

But let us be just to the Bishop of Alexandria. He had spoken and written keenly,—it may be, all allowance made for circumstances, too keenly and too hotly,—but, though he was the man of the age, the man "in whom the Nicene creed took flesh and blood," there were many more Athanasian than Athanasius himself. When the Semi-Arians were returning to the Catholic Church many took deep offence because their heroic leader did not insist on the ὁμοούσιον. Some had scruples about the word, because it seemed to destroy the distinction of persons; but if they professed the substance of the doctrine, holding the essential Divinity of the Son, Athanasius had no scruples that prevented him from acknowledging them as brethren and receiving them into

the bosom of the Church, his wisdom ceasing not to be pure because, as he grew older, it became more peaceable and gentle; and not on the one point alone, but on other points also, he strove to allay dissensions, succeeding for a time, though they broke out fiercely after his death.

I should suppose that, before he went to that God whose honour he sought, Athanasius had little desire to retain the anathema with the creed. On what scriptural authority is the right to anathematise chiefly founded? "Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel than that which ye have received, let him be anathema:" that is the chief precedent for a formal judicial act decreed in a document by men—uninspired men. You may not be able to give a perfectly satisfactory exegesis of the Apostle's fiery words, but you will not go far wrong if, when you adopt them, you take them in the spirit that prompted the still more fervent words: "My heart's desire and prayer for Israel is that they may be saved."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

SOME NOTES ON HILARY.

HILARY, the "Athanasius of the West," was a Trinitarian before he saw the Nicene confessor. He was made bishop in [Poictiers] his native town, in 350 A.D., and died in 367 or 368 A.D.

In the time of his banishment Hilary wrote twelve books on the Trinity (compare the *Orations against the Arians* by Athanasius). He wrote also a book against Constantius, "that Antichrist," but it was not published till after the Emperor's death. Julian, of course, was not disposed to avenge the attack.

Like Justin Martyr and others, in seeking satisfaction for mind and spirit, Hilary first tried philosophy. In his interpretation there are many arbitrary allegories.

He prevented his daughter Abra from marrying, and would have her renounce everything ornamental in dress. When Abra had consented to every sacrifice, and her heart broke, her father rejoiced that she had been delivered from all temptations and had gone to Christ. His wife longed to follow, and in her prayer for a speedy departure he supported her with his intercession. He rejoiced also in her death, which took place soon afterwards.

Hilary seems to have been raised, like Ambrose a quarter of a century later, from a layman to a bishop. He was banished to Phrygia in 356 A.D., the year after that of the synod of Milan, in which Constantius insisted on the acceptance of his own Arian creed. He was present at Seleucia (359 A.D.). Afterwards he went to Constantinople. He offered to engage in a disputation with Arian bishops in presence of the Emperor, but found no hearing. He was sent back to Gaul because his influence in the east was too great.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

CONSTANTINE AND HIS SONS AND THE CHURCH.

From the year 313 A.D., in which the edict of Milan was issued, Constantine had in many ways evinced his growing favour for the Church. The clergy were exempted from the λειτουργία—that is, from the burden of military and municipal service. Bishops were taken into his confidence. The most conspicuous among his Christian friends were Lactantius and Eusebius and Hosius, the last mentioned soon acquiring such an influence over him that the pagans called it magical.

Among the enactments of this period may be mentioned the law by which, from reverence for the Redeemer, the punishment of crucifixion was abolished, and it was prohibited to break the legs of criminals condemned to death.

An attempt was made to abolish gladiatorial shows, but such was the passion of the multitude for them that they were only partially put down during this reign.

With a view to putting a stop to the practice of exposing and killing children, assistance from the public resources and from the Emperor's private wealth was offered to poor parents.

In 321 A.D. Constantine granted the Church legal permission to receive bequests, and in the same year he enjoined the observance of Sunday, not, however, requiring entire cessation from work, an exception being made in favour of labour in the fields. The choice of the name *Dies Solis* ("Day of the Sun") is in accordance with the syncretism that has so often been noticed as characteristic of the Emperor, and to which he even gave expression at the beginning of his famous letter to Alexander and Arius, when he trusted that his intervention would allay the strife which had begun between them. "My design," he says, "was first

to bring the diverse judgments formed by all nations respecting the Deity to a condition, as it were, of settled uniformity; and secondly, to restore a healthy tone to the system of the world, then suffering under the malignant fever of a grievous distemper."[1] Eusebius[2] informs us that, while "he enjoined on all the subjects of the Roman Empire to observe the Lord's Day as a day of rest, and also to honour the day which precedes the Jewish Sabbath (in memory, I suppose, of what the Saviour of mankind is recorded to have achieved on that day), his desire was specially to teach his whole army zealously to honour the Saviour's Day (which derives its name from light and from the sun), and he freely granted to those among them who were partakers of the Divine faith leisure for attending the services of the Church of God, in order that they might be able without impediment to perform their religious worship."

With regard to those who were as yet ignorant of Divine truth, he provided, by a second statute, that they should appear on each Lord's Day on an open plain near the city, and there, at a given signal, offer to God with one accord a prayer which they had previously learned. The prescribed prayer has in it, you will perceive, nothing specifically Christian:—

"We acknowledge Thee the only God; we own Thee as our King, and implore Thy succour. By Thy power have we gotten the victory; through Thee are we mightier than our enemies. We render thanks for Thy past benefits, and trust Thee for future blessings. Together we pray to Thee and beseech Thee long to preserve to us, safe and triumphant, our Emperor Constantine and his pious sons."[3]

The natural consequence of the Emperor's growing preference for Christianity, which showed itself, further, in the distribution of money among the clergy and the building of churches, was that the number of those that professed that religion rapidly increased—so rapidly that, as the story goes, there were baptized at Rome in one year (324 A.D.) twelve thousand men, besides women and children, the Emperor

[1] Constantine is here speaking of the time preceding the defeat and death of Licinius.

[2] *De Vita Const.* iv. 18.

[3] "His coins bore on the one side the letters of the name of Christ, on the other the figure of the Sun-God, and the inscription *Hoc invictus.*"

having promised to each convert a white garment and twenty pieces of gold.[1]

It is unnecessary to remind you that the war which broke out with Licinius in 323 A.D. took, to a certain extent, the character of a war of religion. Though it does not appear that any bloody edicts were issued anew against the Christians in the east, many of them were abandoned to the fury of the pagan populace and to the zeal of the pagan prefects, whose attachment Licinius was desirous of securing. It is no wonder that the victory of his great rival, who had the sympathies of the Christian population throughout the Empire, was considered a new triumph of the banner of the Cross over the delusions of heathendom. Although it is not the case, as it is sometimes represented, that from this time the emblems of heathen worship entirely disappeared from the imperial coins, yet Constantine now made no secret of his desire that all his subjects should embrace the religion to which he believed he owed his success. Paganism, however, he continued to tolerate, and there is no evidence that he ever entirely prohibited sacrifices to the gods.[2] If he destroyed certain temples, it was, as we have seen, those in which immoralities and impositions were practised. On the other hand, he erected many churches, some of them magnificent. They were reared at Nicomedia, Antioch, Heliopolis, and Rome, and at the holy sepulchre at Jerusalem. This church building was a work to which, doubtless, he was earnestly encouraged by his mother Helena, who had already reared places of Christian worship at Bethlehem and the Mount of Olives. At another spot in the promised land—a place of ancient fame—there is said to have prevailed a superstitious worship of a peculiar kind, in which Jews, pagans, and Christians all took part. In the old grove of Mamre the professors of those different religions among the neighbouring tribes were wont to assemble round an altar under the terebinth, where, it was said, Abraham had offered sacrifice. Some adorned the patriarch's well with lights, some poured wine into it, and others, again, threw down cakes and coins. The Emperor caused the altar to be destroyed, and a Christian church to be built on the spot.

[1] This is not well authenticated.

[2] Private sacrifices, however, and divination were forbidden.

The strong desire for unity by which Constantine was constantly actuated, and which led him to call the first ecumenical council, influenced him in great part to take a step which he himself ascribed to Divine inspiration. He transferred the imperial residence to Byzantium, which, raised from its desolation, and enlarged and beautified, became the new Rome, free from the mighty traditions by which pagandom, in spite of the numerous conversions said to have been made in one year, was still so deeply rooted in the soil, and inhabited from the first by a population so little prone to idolatry that, it is said, the smoke of heathen sacrifice never ascended from the seven hills of this Rome except during the brief reign of the Apostate.[1] Not to speak of its vast political importance, no site could be better chosen for centralising the Christianity of the east, and for connecting the Church of the eastern with that of the western portion of the Empire. No doubt the connection was destined in the course of centuries to be broken; but, while it was maintained, the influence which east and west exerted upon each other was of momentous consequence. The centre, however, was in the east, and it was essentially political. It is impossible to say how vast an influence this may have had on the development of the papacy in Rome. The spiritual power asserted itself against the temporal.[2] Constantinople, that most beautifully situated of all capitals, for which, said Gregory of Nazianzus, "sea and land emulate each other to load it with their treasures and crown it queen of cities," continued till the fifteenth century to be a bulwark of Christianity, first against the Germanic

[1] The new capital was solemnly consecrated on May 11, 330 A.D.

[2] Milman puts it too strongly when he says: "The removal of the seat of empire to Constantinople consummated the separation of Greek and Latin Christianity; one took the dominion of the East, the other of the West."

He says more justly: "The tide of Greek trade has ebbed away from the West, and found a nearer mart; political and religious ambition and adventure crowd to the new Eastern court. That court becomes the chosen scene of Christian controversy; the Emperor is the proselyte to gain whom contending parties employ argument, influence, intrigue."

And then, with regard to Rome: "In one respect Rome lost in dignity: she was no longer the sole metropolis of the empire; the East no longer treated her with the deference of a subject. On the other hand, she was the uncontested, unrivalled head of her own hemisphere; she had no rival in those provinces which yet held her allegiance."—[*Hist. of Latin Christianity*, bk. i. ch. 2.]

tribes, and then against Islam and its votaries. Here the treasures of Greek literature and art were preserved when they were unknown, or little known, in the west, and the fall of Constantinople in 1453 A.D. was our riches. It was an event which Providence overruled remarkably to prepare for the Reformation of the sixteenth century. The city is now under the Turk. Were you to look on those hills and domes and minarets from the opposite shore, where the religion of your home would be mightily recalled by words on the gravestones of British soldiers and British nurses, you would, while recalling the day on which the august city rose, almost, we may say, like an exhalation, anticipate and sigh for the time when she will again possess the faith of the man whose name she bears, and than whom, though he had his sins, she has never seen a greater sovereign.

In the new city, destined so long and often so intensely to fix the regard of the world, Constantine adorned the walls of his palace with representations of the crucifixion and other scriptural subjects. Here, too, he erected many churches, one of them being the Church of the Apostles, which was to be his burying-place. A new epoch was come, and a new path was opened for the arts. The Emperor is said to have taken great pleasure in listening to the discourses of the bishops, and, even when they were protracted to an unusual length, to have continued standing during the whole time of their delivery—*Semper ego auditor tantum, nunquamne reponam?*[1] He also delivered discourses himself in presence of the court and many thousand hearers, who loudly applauded his refutation of idolatry and his recommendation of Christianity, in favour of which he appealed to history, especially the history of the immediate past, and to prophecy, including the Sibylline Books and the fourth Eclogue of Virgil. One of his discourses has been preserved by Eusebius. It is entitled, "Oration to the Assembly of the Saints" (*Oratio ad Sanctorum Coetum*). The same writer, who has doubtless greatly amplified this production, which, as it stands, is equal to at least four ordinary sermons, commends most warmly the Emperor's devout observance of Easter. "At that salutary feast," he says, "his religious diligence was

[1] ["Shall I always be only a hearer, and never pay back?"—*Juv.* i. 1.]

doubled; he fulfilled, as it were, the duties of a hierophant with every energy of his mind and body, and outvied all others in the zealous celebration of this feast. He changed, too, the holy night-vigil into a brightness like that of day, by causing waxen tapers of great length to be lighted throughout the city; besides which, torches everywhere diffused their light, so as to impart to this mystic vigil a brilliant splendour beyond that of day. As soon as day itself returned, in imitation of our Saviour's gracious act, he opened a liberal hand to his subjects of every nation, province, and people, and lavished abundant bounties on all."[1]

There lies a deeper stain on Constantine than the execution, in violation of the oath given to Constantia, of Licinius. Crispus, his first son by his wife Minervina, he caused to be put to death. According to the account that seems to be most commonly received,[2] Crispus was murdered on a false and abominable accusation, brought against him by his stepmother Fausta, who soon after, on the discovery of the prince's innocence, was herself executed, not only as the accuser of her stepson, but as an adulteress. Gibbon ascribes the murder of the Emperor's son to jealousy, the prince having distinguished himself in war, and having won a dangerous popularity. Speaking of him and of the young Licinius, who was involved in his ruin, he says: "The story of these unhappy princes, the nature and evidence of their guilt, the forms of their trial, and the circumstances of their death, were buried in mysterious obscurity; and the courtly bishop, who has celebrated in an elaborate work the virtues and piety of his hero, observes a prudent silence on the subject of these tragic events."[3] Remarkably enough, some of the heathens, including Zosimus and the Emperor Julian, afterwards connected Constantine's conversion to Christianity with the murder of his son and other instances of blood-guiltiness. Tortured by conscience, he applied to heathen priests or to Neo-platonic philosophers,—the story is told both ways,—in the hope that they would be able to cleanse the

[1] *De Vita Constant.* iv. 22.

[2] "Suspicion of political conspiracy" was another ground assigned. Schaff combines the two.

[3] *Decline and Fall*, chap. xviii.

foul bosom, and "pluck out the rooted sorrow from the brain." The answer was, that for such crimes there was no atonement. Looking about for deliverance, the Emperor obtained from some Christian or Christians the assurance that all his sins would be washed away if he repented and were baptized. Thereupon he became a Christian himself, and desired his subjects to embrace a religion that offered such comfort to the wicked. That the holy mystery of redemption should be thus misrepresented and profaned is nothing unusual, but the story is sufficiently refuted by the chronology. Constantine's confession of Christianity long preceded the date of the murder of Crispus, and his baptism did not take place till he lay on his deathbed.

In the Martyrs' Church at Drepanum in Bithynia, afterwards, in honour of Helena, who had died at the age of eighty, called Helenopolis, Constantine, who had preached to applauding crowds, who had convoked and powerfully influenced the first ecumenical council, and who had called himself a bishop,[1] was received into the number of catechumens. He was already sick; and soon after, as he lay on his deathbed at Nicomedia, baptism was administered to him by Eusebius. Fain would he have made a pilgrimage to the promised land, to be baptized in the Jordan, but he doubted not the virtue of the ordinance, though administered with common water—common it ceased to be in the performance of the rite. Thenceforward he would wear no more the imperial robe, but rested, clad in a white garment, on a white bed. He had now received the Divine light, he said; he had now entered on true life.[2]

On Pentecost, the twenty-second of May of the year 337 A.D., in the sixty-fifth year of his age, he died,[3] having reigned longer than any of his predecessors from the time of Augustus. Upon the news of his death, Eusebius tells us,

[1] ἐπίσκοπος τῶν ἔξω [of the "external affairs" of the Church].

[2] "On his deathbed he granted to several who had been unjustly banished permission to return, and made several bequests to the churches, particularly the Roman."—Hergenröther [*Kirchengesch.*, 1ter s. 205].

[3] At Ancyrona, a suburb of Nicomedia. "He probably died with the same consolation as Peter" (the Great), "whose last words were: 'I trust that in respect to the good I have striven to do my people (the Church), God will pardon my sins.'"—Schaff [*Church History*, vol. ii. p. 17].

the bodyguard rent their garments, and prostrated themselves, and struck their heads on the ground, while the rest of the soldiers mourned as a flock the removal of their good shepherd, and the people ran wildly through the city, each lamenting the event as a personal calamity. The soldiers laid the body in a golden coffin, which they enveloped in a covering of purple, and removed it to the city called by his own name. There, in the central apartment of the palace, the body lay on an elevated resting-place, arrayed in the symbols of sovereignty—the diadem and purple robe—surrounded with candles burning on golden candlesticks, and encircled by a numerous retinue of attendants, who watched around it incessantly day and night. Military officers, magistrates, and senators, followed by multitudes of every rank, including women and children, came to witness the marvellous spectacle, and all saluted their coffined sovereign with bended knee, as though he were still alive. "This blessed prince," says the biographer, "reigned still in death." Before he was buried, paintings embodying a representation of heaven itself, and depicting the Emperor in an ethereal mansion above the celestial vault, were dedicated to his memory. Soldiers and citizens awaited the arrival of his sons, who, they declared, were alone worthy to be his successors. At length Constantius came. He took the chief place in the funeral procession, soldiers in military array going before, and vast multitudes of the people following. When the coffin was laid within the Church of the Apostles, and Constantius had withdrawn with his soldiers, the ministers of God came forward and offered their prayers amid surrounding multitudes of the faithful, who united, with many tears, in supplicating for the deceased Emperor's soul. The body meanwhile was raised on a lofty scaffolding, and fervent eulogies on the character of the departed were joined with prayers for his repose. The historian does not tell us what was afterwards done with the body; but Constantine himself had once said to a courtier: "Though thou couldst obtain the whole world, thou shalt have at last no more than this little spot which I mark with my spear" (tracing the dimensions of a human figure), "if, indeed, even that be thine; for thou mayest be consumed by fire, or drowned in the sea, or devoured by wild

beasts."[1] Eusebius, however, looks at the death of the Emperor only in the one aspect—it was a triumphal chariot for the greatest of rulers. He tells us, indeed, that a coin was struck, on which Constantine appeared on the one side with his head closely veiled, and on the reverse as a charioteer drawn by four horses, a hand stretched down from above to receive him into heaven. His sons also receive from the aged historian a tribute which probably he would have withheld had he written at the end, and not at the beginning, of their reign. He would not compare their father with that bird which dies in the midst of aromatic perfumes, and, rising from its own ashes with new life, soars aloft in the same form as it had before, but rather with the Saviour, who, as the sown corn which is multiplied from a single grain, had yielded abundant increase through the blessing of God, and had overflowed the world with its fruit. So Constantine became multiplied, as it were, through the succession of his sons.

It can hardly be questioned that Constantine was mourned sincerely. His reign had been long and successful. As a general he had won unfading laurels. Though he did not adhere to the principles of religious equality proclaimed in 313, but in various ways favoured the Church, he acted towards his pagan subjects with a caution and wisdom that contrast most advantageously with the conduct of his successors. Though with him were laid the foundations of the so-called "Cæsareopapy," which found its antithesis, and, in some measure, its corrective, in the Papacy, yet it cannot be doubted that his great end was not to impose any theological tenets of his own, but to promote the interests of peace and unity in a way consistent with what he understood to be the mind of the Church. Though his character was by no means spotless—though he even disgraced his reign with some great crimes—though, like Clovis and others, he may have been drawn to Christianity by the belief that Christ, more powerful than the gods of antiquity, could give him the victory over his enemies—though something heathenish may have adhered to him till he lay on his death-bed at Nicomedia—we are not entitled to deny that he had convictions that could be properly

[1] [*De Vita Const.* iv. 30.]

called religious, or to suppose that the devout speeches which, possibly with additions and embellishments, have been put into his mouth, are from beginning to end pure inventions.

As to the importance which Christianity acquired in his reign, "for that," says Baur, "Christianity has to thank herself;" and what gives Constantine importance in the history of religion is, not his own private convictions, whatever they may have been, but mainly this, that he understood his time. That the Roman senate of the age did not understand, but it did not withhold its tribute from Constantine. It enrolled among the gods him who is everywhere called great, and who in the east is celebrated as ἅγιος, ἰσαπόστολος—"a saint," "the equal of the apostles."

In accordance with the will which Constantine himself had declared in 335 A.D. the great Empire was divided among his three sons, the eldest, Constantine II., receiving the lands of his grandfather Chlorus—Gaul, Spain, and Britain; Constantius receiving Asia, Syria, and Egypt; and Constans, the third son, receiving Italy and Africa, along with the lands between the Black Sea and the Adriatic. To secure themselves on the throne, the three rid themselves, in oriental fashion, of those who might possibly become their rivals; at their succession, as it has been expressed, "they trod upon the corpses of the numerous kindred of their father, excepting two nephews, Gallus and Julian, who were saved only by sickness and youth from the fury of the soldiers."

According to Eusebius, the three sons had received an admirable Christian education. Their father had not only given them the best and most approved teachers, but had himself taught them to prefer the knowledge and fear of God to all riches and worldly power, and had exhorted them to protect the Church, and make a public profession of Christianity. But the sons, having got their kindred out of the way, began to quarrel among themselves. Constantine II., who fain would have added the rest of Africa to his allotted part of it, made war upon his brother Constans, and perished in the battle of Aquileia three years after his accession. The Empire was thus divided between the two surviving brothers, and Constantius held the east, and Constans the west, till, ten years afterwards, Constans was murdered (350 A.D.) by the

barbarian usurper Magnentius, whom the legions of Gaul had hailed with the title of Augustus. Magnentius having been in turn defeated,[1] and having taken his own life, Constantius became sole Emperor. He continued to reign through troublous years till 361 A.D., when, like his father, he died a natural death, having, in this also like his father, undergone baptism shortly before he expired.

Constantius, as sole Emperor, continued to carry on the work which had been begun in the time of Constans, and in conjunction with him, the work, namely, of the violent extermination of the heathen religion. A vain prince, flattered and swayed, it is said, by eunuchs, women, and bishops, he rushed forward where his father would have wisely held back, and used language, and issued edicts from which his father would have shrunk. He ordered that the temples should everywhere be shut, and forbade sacrifices on pain of death. But, though the governors of provinces who neglected to enforce the ordinance were threatened with the same penalty, it was found impossible to carry the imperial will fully into execution, especially in Rome and Alexandria, where, though the simple faith in the gods as cherished in early times no longer existed, the minds of many were fettered by great recollections, and where the desperate struggle of Neo-platonism to infuse new life into the old religion was helped by the perverse and cruel means now resorted to for the establishment of the Christian truth. A reaction could not, indeed, permanently restore that which was without inner life; but if a reaction came, and it did come, it must be mainly ascribed to the intolerance and violence of the sons of Constantine, which had their effect on Julian, and which justified the most celebrated heathen orators of the time, when, working themselves up into enthusiasm for the gods, they raised an accusation the opposite of that which had been heard in the preceding centuries: "The Christians cast themselves down before the image of the Emperor, that their religion may be propagated by imperial favour." There were indeed powerful voices heard demanding toleration for orthodoxy,—you remember that the Arian Constantius persecuted not only the pagans, but the adherents of the Nicene creed,—but it must be admitted that the Church

[1] At Mursa.

approved of the measures of repression against the votaries of the ancient religion.[1] And certainly, when she was enriched by violence with the booty of heathen temples, the gain was not hers—it was the enemy's.

[1] Yet Constantius "left the most famous schools in the hands of heathen sophists and the Neo-platonists, and, inconsistently enough, filled the priestly offices when vacant." "He forbade perversion to the Jewish religion, 357."—Hergenröther [*Kirchengesch.* 1ter Band, s. 205].

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

JULIAN.

On the death of Constantius (361 A.D.), and the accession of Julian, the hopes of the heathen revived, and the Christians were threatened with a new period of persecution.

Flavius Claudius Julian, born on the 17th November 331 A.D., was the youngest son of Constantius, stepbrother of Constantine the Great, and of Basilina, who died a few months after her child's birth. To the misfortune of having never known a mother was added the death of his father and his elder brother, murdered, the report went, by the secret command of his cousin, Constantius. He himself was thought too young, and his brother Gallus too weak in health, to be dangerous.

An old slave, to whom the education of the future Emperor was entrusted, gave him his first lessons in classic literature; but, while he conceived an admiration for the gods and heroes of Homer, he describes himself as having been from childhood filled with a violent longing after the brightness of the god Helios. The sight of the heavenly light transported him, and on clear, cloudless nights, he would go forth to gaze on the beauty of the starry heaven, and was so enraptured that he had no ear for anyone who might chance to address him.

When he was thirteen years of age, he was removed, along with his brother, to an imperial castle in Cappadocia (Makellum), where he was kept six years in entire seclusion from the world, wretched with suspicion, and surrounded with clergymen. "He was systematically spoiled," says Schaff, "by false education, and made the enemy of that very religion which pedantic teachers attempted to force upon his free and independent mind, and which they so poorly recommended

by their lives. We have a striking parallel in more recent history in the case of Frederick the Great of Prussia."[1]

On the other hand, however, it has been noticed that Julian himself, in an epistle to the Athenians, in which he details all that he had to suffer from Constantius, does not complain of the pious exercises in which, while a youth, he was required to take part.

Having returned to Constantinople, Julian frequented the schools of learning,[2] while his brother was drawn to the court. And now he felt the influence, to which he was strongly predisposed, of that philosophical, allegorical method of interpreting the old poets which could give a pure sense to fables seemingly the most gross and licentious, and made the gods of Olympus live again in idealised form. The influence of this philosophical sect had never been greater; and Julian, who had been closely observed, Constantius having even heard that many of the people spoke of the youth as already fit to reign, was speedily withdrawn from it. He was removed to Nicomedia, but it so happened that the most distinguished of the Neo-platonic philosophers—Libanius—arrived there about the same time; and, though Julian was prohibited from attending the prælections of this heathen teacher, his Christian instructors, it is said, exacting from him an oath that he would not attend them, he contrived to obtain possession of his manuscripts, which he eagerly read. It is needless to say that the waters were none the less sweet because they were stolen. He was charmed, not only with the allegorical wisdom of his teacher, but with his Platonic doctrine of the soul—its heavenly origin, and the hope that, though now a captive, it would yet be freed from the bonds of matter.[3]

But the philosophy of Julian was allied with superstition. While he held a certain monotheism, making the visible Helios the mediator, so to speak, between the universe and the one invisible, eternal source of light and life, he believed

[1] [*History of the Christian Church*, vol. ii. p. 41.]

[2] At Constantinople he was under the superintendence of the eunuch Mardonius; and there the grammarian Nikokles, and the sophist Ekebolus were his first teachers.

[3] His brother Gallus visited him at Nicomedia, and advised him, without making any impression, to remain true to the Christian religion.

in a multitude of subordinate divinities, some of whom, he declared, visited him in the night season and assured him of their favour. He practised the art of divination, and, at the time when his Christian impressions, if he ever had any impressions that could be truly called by that name, were effaced by the teaching of Libanius, and also by the philosopher Maximus of Ephesus, at Nicomedia, and when their lessons were confirmed by Chrysanthius at Ephesus, the friends of paganism, flattering his vanity, entertained him with prophecies, which he accepted as coming from heaven, of the victory which was soon to be won for the gods, and won by him. His renunciation of Christianity, however, which, according to himself, took place in his twentieth year (351 A.D.), was by no means open. On the contrary, he even took office in the Church of Nicomedia as a reader (*ἀναγνώστης*), and — what is still more astonishing — ten years afterwards, when he had won a brilliant name, and the imperial crown was within his grasp, he was, according to reliable evidence, found at Vienne, where an old blind woman had prophesied that he would restore the temples of the gods, solemnly celebrating the feast of Epiphany, and pronouncing a lofty panegyric on the man whom he hated as deeply as he hated Christianity, and who certainly had no claims on his love or admiration—his cousin Constantius.

But before his public life began, and after that of his brother Gallus, who had been made Cæsar, and had been found incapable, unjust, and violent, had ended tragically,[1] he was delivered, through the friendly influence of Eusebia, from captivity at Milan, where he had been kept for more than seven months in constant fear of sharing the fate of the rest of his family, and some time after, obtaining an audience of the Emperor, was directed to betake himself to Athens. If anything was needed to confirm him in his sentiments, it was

[1] Flavius Julius Gallus was also the son of Julianus Constantius, but by Galla. His teachers at Makellum were Nikokles Luco, the grammarian; and Ekebolus, the rhetorician, and he was under the superintendence of the eunuch Mardonius, and of Eusebius, afterwards of Cæsarea.

Gallus was made Cæsar in 351 A.D. He incited a mob to murder imperial commissioners sent to inquire into his conduct (negligence and misgovernment), who had, indeed, been imprudent and haughty. He was ensnared and was beheaded in a prison (354 A.D.).

his residence in the city in which learned teachers had already converted Christian youths to the old religion, already the religion of Julian's heart, and a religion for which innumerable monuments on the heights and in the plain pled with a charming eloquence to which he was too willing to abandon himself.

At this time he was initiated in the Eleusinian mysteries.

Suddenly, and contrary, it is probable, to his own expectation, Julian was thrown into a military and political career. Chiefly through the influence of Eusebia, he was adorned with the title and the purple of Cæsar by Constantius, who, now advancing in age, and seeing the Empire exposed to great dangers, both in the east and in the west, felt his need of a colleague. Julian, to whom, at the same time, he gave his sister Helena in marriage, was nominated (355 A.D.) to the command in Gaul, where he was called to contend against the Allemanni and Franks. Although he was totally unskilled and inexperienced in the art of war, and for a time his command was merely nominal, the Cæsar being wise enough to follow the directions of those who had skill and experience, he soon compensated for what was wanting; and, as if all his life he had occupied himself with arms, and not with books, he soon distinguished himself as a brave and able general, and astounded the Empire by his administration, as well as by his prowess.

But, while the idol of the legions and the terror of the barbarians, Julian found opportunity for the prosecution of his favourite studies, and for his secret devotions too—for prayers to Helios, in whom he beheld the image and brightness of the eternal source of light, and to Hermes, in whom he adored the all-penetrating world spirit. But though he concealed his religious sympathies, and gave no indication that he was nourishing rebellious projects, his brilliant reputation and extraordinary popularity inflamed the Emperor with jealousy and suspicion. Constantius wrote commanding that the greater part of Julian's troops should be withdrawn from him, but the soldiers refused to obey, and, surrounding their general, who was as great a favourite with them as the Emperor had been in his day, loudly and impetuously proclaimed him Augustus. It was after this that Julian went

to Vienne; and though in all likelihood his resolution to accept the offered crown and restore the ancient religion was already taken, he still wore the mask, and, in order to disarm the suspicions, not only of Constantius, but of the whole Christian party, joined in the celebration of the feast of Epiphany (361 A.D.). The first public declaration of his religion was made to the ambassadors whom the Emperor sent to treat with him, and to recall him under promise of safe-conduct. He replied openly that he thought it better to trust to the gods than to the words of Constantius. Assured of victory, he set out with his soldiers who, as Gibbon (from Ammianus) tells, "clashing their shields, and pointing their drawn swords to their throats, devoted themselves, with horrid imprecations, to the service of a leader whom they celebrated as the deliverer of Gaul, and the conqueror of the Germans."[1] They protested that they would follow him to the furthest extremities of Europe or of Asia. The calamity of a civil war was averted by the timely death of Constantius, who was seized with fever while on his way from Antioch to take revenge on his rival, and expired at a little town in the neighbourhood of Tarsus. Julian had been received with triumphant acclamation in Constantinople before the remains of his cousin were brought thither. Clad in mourning, he accompanied the funeral to the Church of the Apostles.

The prodigious activity of Julian during his short reign has scarcely a parallel in history. Schaff, recalling what he was as a prince, general, judge, high-priest, correspondent and author, and remarking that his only recreation was change of labour, and not only so, but that his labours were simultaneously manifold (he would at one time use his hand in writing, his ear in hearing, and his voice in speaking), says that "he sought to unite the fame of an Alexander, a Marcus Aurelius, a Plato, and a Diogenes."[2] As to Marcus Aurelius, it may be noticed that his image seemed constantly to hover before the soul of Julian as the ideal of a ruler, and, like that sovereign, he regarded the maintenance of the old religion as the most powerful support of the throne and the

[1] [*Decline and Fall*, ch. xxii.; *Ammian.* xxi. 5.]
[2] [*History of the Christian Church*, vol. ii. p. 45.]

necessary condition of the public welfare. As to his seeking the fame of Diogenes, Julian carried his simplicity and severity to an extreme cynicism, which transgressed decency, and injured him greatly even in the estimation of his pagan admirers. In his religious activity, in particular—in the perpetual unrest and excitement with which he hastened from temple to temple, sacrificed at all altars and left nothing untried in his attempt to restore the pagan worship in its full pomp and splendour, with all its ceremonies and mysteries—in this Baur sees unmistakable evidence of a secret consciousness that the enterprise to which he set himself was an unnatural and a hopeless one.[1]

Even in the activity that Julian showed in another direction immediately after his accession, and that was, on the whole, most advantageous to his burdened subjects, Gibbon himself, who, as a rule, is by no means disposed to underrate the Emperor, finds something to censure. What he did, he overdid. In reducing the monstrous expenditure of the imperial court, he forgot the laws of reason and justice. "Soon after his entrance into the palace of Constantinople," Gibbon relates, "he had occasion for the service of a barber. An officer, magnificently dressed, immediately presented himself. 'It is a barber,' exclaimed the prince, with affected surprise, 'that I want, and not a receiver-general of the finances.' He questioned the man concerning the profits of his employment; and was informed, that besides a large salary, and some valuable perquisites, he enjoyed a daily allowance for twenty servants, and as many horses. A thousand barbers, a thousand cup-bearers, a thousand cooks, were distributed in the several offices of luxury; and the number of eunuchs could be compared only with the insects of a summer's day." After going into some particulars as the enormous waste caused by the creation and sale of so many superfluous and titular employments, he says: "By a single edict, he reduced the palace of Constantinople to an immense desert, and dismissed with ignominy the whole train of slaves and dependants, without providing any just, or at least, benevolent exceptions, for the age, the services,

[1] [*Die Christliche Kirche vom Anfang des 4ten bis zum Enden des 6ten Jahrhunderts*, s. 17.]

or the poverty, of the faithful domestics of the imperial family."[1]

But we return to that which above all claims our attention —the vain, the Sisyphean, or, if you will take the word of Strauss, which has become famous, the "romantic" undertaking of Julian to restore the ancient religion. But what first of all and most of all surprises in him, says one who was certainly more of a philosopher than the Emperor, is not his zeal for the old, but his vile hatred of the new. The circumstances of his early life may partly account for his aversion, his contempt, his hatred, but that the influence of those circumstances was not necessarily irresistible, is a thing obvious enough in itself; and, if it were not, it would be sufficient to remember that they were common to him with his brother Gallus, who not only continued to profess the Christian religion, but earnestly counselled Julian not to desert it. But again, if you will find external causes, stress may be laid on the theological disputes which agitated the Empire during the reign of Constantius, and which were doubtless calculated to alienate or repel the minds of many from Christianity. Still further, Neo-platonic teachers did much to mould him; but Basil the Great and Gregory of Nazianzus also studied under Neo-platonic teachers, and at Athens too, and they left that city stronger in the faith than when they entered it, though with sad forebodings of the young prince who studied there at the same time, and afterwards opened the wondrous temple dedicated to the Motherless Virgin. Probably a deeper reason, though the reasons mentioned may be taken into consideration, lies in the strange attraction which outward nature, and especially the glory of the great god Helios and of the nocturnal heavens, exercised upon him from his early years. This sympathy with the life of nature produced an aversion to that religion which he was wont to characterise as a religion of the dead and of graves, whose votaries worshipped a dead Jew, and, not content with one dead man, were continually adding new ones, as he said in allusion to the growing veneration for relics. There is, moreover, something in Strauss's idea of the romantic, as applied to those who, dissatisfied and at war with the present, do not

[1] [*Decline and Fall*, ch. xxii.]

press forward to the future, but revert eagerly and passionately to obsolete conditions—to systems which have outlived themselves. You have romantic poets, according to him, in those who esteem it the highest wisdom to reproduce in melodious verse the fables that fed the faith of the mediæval world; romantic theologians in those who, by philosophical and æsthetic additions, strive to make their stale theological crumbs once more palatable and digestible; romantic politicians in those who see in the restoration—it may be the partial restoration—of mediæval conditions the great remedy for the ills of the modern state. So Julian was a romantic prince when he made the attempt to translate by public measures his enthusiasm for the old religion into reality. This enthusiasm which some historians (not Gibbon, however) commend as a most estimable quality, makes him ridiculous in the eyes of Strauss. No one, so far as I have observed, adopts Strauss's theory without, at least, great qualifications. But there are many minds so constituted that dissatisfaction with the present does produce a passionate desire to recall the past; and with regard to religion, though the distinction between the treasure and the earthen vessels may be theoretically recognised, practically it is often lost sight of, and a system which may have no inherent worth or beauty filters insensibly, though not through the intellect, into the heart and soul, when it is learned from master-pieces of imperishable fame. Julian's favourite writers do not of course now produce in any one such a positive result as they did in his case. But if, even now, there be dangers from such sources of a negative result, how much greater was that danger, and how much more likely was the negative result to be followed by the positive, the romantic, the inherently futile desire to make the stream of history flow backwards, when there was no literature of a high order save that which was pagan.

We may note briefly a few particulars as to Julian's position :—

1. Julian's view of Christianity.

Julian was far from admiring Judaism, but he considered Christianity a most unhappy disfiguration of that ancient monotheistic faith. Not that the corruption of the Jewish

religion had begun with the Galileans. Though their legislator had commanded the outcast Hebrews not to revile the gods, in process of time they had become daring blasphemers, and this impiety had passed to the Christians. In truth, they had appropriated, not the best, but the worst, from both Jews and heathens. They were like leeches, drawing to themselves as much impure blood as possible, and leaving the pure. From paganism, for example, while they rejected everything in it that was high and ennobling, they accepted the principle that they might eat all meats without distinction. The worship they rendered to saints and relics was a natural consequence of the worship rendered to their dead founder, who was first called a God by the good John. Before the image which fell from heaven, and was the pledge of the eternal duration of the city, they refused to bow; but they fell down before a wooden cross, impressed the sign of the cross on their foreheads, set up the cross in their houses. Christ, though he might have cured some lame and blind people in Bethsaida and elsewhere, had achieved nothing memorable in his life-time, and for three centuries his adherents had been gained among the worst sort. The writings of the Christians were so far from containing anything fitted to cultivate the mind or strengthen the character, that the young who receive no instruction but from such works could not be expected, if they grew up to manhood, to become anything better than slaves. Of all the jugglers and deceivers that had ever taught, Paul was the worst. He changed like a polypus. At one time he taught that the Jews were God's inheritance; at another time, to gain proselytes, that God was not the God of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also.

2. The measures Julian took for the suppression of Christianity.

Marcus Aurelius had not felt a deeper contempt for Christianity than was felt by Julian. Paganism was indispensable to the stability of the Empire, but two centuries had passed away, and though Julian was by no means a greater philosopher than Aurelius, he discerned as clearly as Chlorus, or as the illustrious son of Chlorus, that the new religion was not to be put down by fire and sword. Although he may have had recourse to violence in particular cases, where it

could be alleged that the heathen religion, or perhaps he personally, had been assailed with insolent scorn, or some plausible pretext could be made; and though he may sometimes have left the lawless rage of a mob or the capricious cruelty of a prefect unpunished, he issued no such edicts as came from Diocletian; he did not engage in a systematic, general war of extermination. He proclaimed, on the contrary, universal toleration for the Christians, and he prided himself on recalling the bishops whom his predecessor had banished, and on leaving the different theological parties free to bite and devour one another.

But he had recourse to ridicule. That as an author he should use this weapon we have comparatively little reason to complain, though we may regret that he drew his material from sources which we regard as sacred. But mockery coming from a ruler when he is appealed to as such is quite a different thing. We read that, when a Christian subject appeared before him with a complaint, he would dismiss him, telling him that his master had commanded him to turn the left cheek to him who smote him on the right, and, when any one would take his coat, to let him have his cloak also. Or when—it might be through injustice—property was taken from the churches, he would scoffingly say that he was thus making the entrance into the kingdom of heaven easier for those people. It is, however, as little ground for censure as cause for surprise that Julian withdrew from the clergy the privileges that Constantine and his sons had conferred upon them. He again imposed upon them the public burdens from which the former government had exempted them, and the right to receive bequests, conceded to the Church as a corporation forty years before, was now taken from it. Being desirous of introducing the old religious forms into public life, he sought, as far as possible, to bring honourable offices into the hands of pagans.

But by far the most remarkable measure adopted by Julian, with a view to the gradual extermination of the Christians, was his proscribing the teaching of the classics in public Christian schools, "lest," as the reason is stated by Socrates, "when the Christians have sharpened their tongue, they

should be able the more readily to meet the arguments of the heathen."[1]

As to the prohibition, it is sometimes stated, and the language of some ancient historians would seem to warrant the statement, that Julian forbade the Christians to learn the classics. But what actually was forbidden was, not the learning, but the teaching of them. Christian parents were not prevented from sending their children to heathen instructors, but, as few of them would be disposed to do so, especially at this time of reaction, when temptations to apostasy were so powerful, it will be easily understood how some authors, in speaking of the imperial decree, should have described it as it appeared to them in effect. But, giving it correctly, even the pagan historian Ammianus Marcellinus characterises it as *obruendum perenni silentio* ["to be lost in everlasting silence"].[2] How cruel a blow was thus struck against Christianity, the educated among the Christians felt deeply. There are several interesting passages on the subject, showing the view they took of this "mild" measure of punishment. Let me quote from Socrates,[3] who, often speaking of the goodness of Divine Providence in rendering the law wholly inoperative through the early death of its author, says he can imagine objectors concluding that classic literature, instead of being conducive to the promotion of true religion, is rather to be deprecated as subversive of it. He answers by arguing that the learned works of the Greeks, though not divinely inspired, are not forbidden in the writings that are; and that, moreover,

[1] Soc. iii. 4. In the same chapter we have the story of Maris, Bishop of Chalcedon. The bishop was blind. When he was introduced into the presence of Julian, and remonstrated with him on his apostasy, "You blind old fool," answered the Emperor, "this Galilean god of yours will never cure you." "I thank God," was the reply, "for bereaving me of my sight, that I might not behold the face of one who has fallen into such awful impiety." It is stated that the Emperor suffered this to pass without further notice at the time, but afterwards had his revenge. If anything could be more unworthy of a sovereign than the language to Maris, it was his calling Athanasius ἀνθρωπίσκος ["manikin;" just what Queen Elizabeth gave to Robert Cecil from her death-bed: "Little man, little man! thy father, if he had been alive, durst not have used that word."]

[2] xxii. 10

[3] Socrates was born 380 A.D. His history, beginning with the proclamation of Constantine, extends over a period of 140 years.

they teach us many things by which we are the stronger in conflict with our adversaries. Then he proceeds:—

"Julian well knew, when he prohibited by law Christians from being educated in Greek literature, that the fables it contains would expose the whole pagan system, of which he had become the champion, to ridicule and contempt. Even Socrates, the most celebrated of their philosophers, despised these absurdities, and was condemned to die on account of it, as if he had attempted to violate the sanctity of their deities. Moreover, both Christ and His apostles enjoin us to become discriminating money-changers,[1] so that we might prove all things, and hold fast that which is good; directing us also to beware lest any one should spoil us through philosophy and vain deceit. But this we cannot do unless we possess ourselves of the weapons of our adversaries, taking care that in making this acquisition we do not adopt their sentiments, but, analysing whatever is presented to us, reject the evil and retain what is good and true; for good, wherever it is found, is a property of truth. Should anyone imagine that in making these assertions we wrest the Scriptures from their legitimate construction, let it be remembered that the apostle not only does not forbid our being instructed in Greek learning, but himself seems by no means to have neglected it, inasmuch as he often quotes from Greek authors. Whence did he get the saying, 'The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies,' but from a perusal of the oracles of Epimenides, the Cretian initiator? Or how would he have known this, 'For we are also his offspring,' had he not been acquainted with the *Phenomena* of Aratus the astronomer? Again, this sentence, 'Evil communications corrupt good manners,' is a sufficient proof that he was conversant with the tragedies of Euripides.[2] But what need is there of enlarging on this point? It is well known that in ancient times the doctors of the Church by uninterrupted use were accustomed to exercise themselves in the learning of the Greeks, until they had reached an advanced age. This they did with a view to polish and strengthen the mind, as well

[1] τραπεζῖται δόκιμοι; found also in Origen and Jerome.

[2] The argument is equally good whether Paul's learning was extensive or not, perhaps even stronger if it was not.

as to improve in eloquence, and at the same time to enable them to refute the errors of the heathen."[1]

Contenting himself with such measures as I have indicated, Julian calculated that, as many under the former government had become Christians for the sake of advantage, they would, under his, renounce their profession. As respects not a few, he did not err, but he grievously underrated the number and the strength of those who were immovable in their convictions.

3. The means which Julian took for the re-establishment of paganism.

For the restoration of the old religion Julian employed, not only his imperial power, which, it was often said, was more to be dreaded than his arguments or his ridicule, but also what indeed was associated with imperial power, and had been associated with it even under Constantine—the position and dignity of *pontifex maximus*. It was his aim to present in his own person the ideal of a true priest as a pattern of devotion and strict virtue. No one sacrificed to the gods with greater frequency or with greater zeal. In his own palace there was erected a chapel to Helios, under whose special protection he placed himself, and daily he presented his offering to the rising and to the setting sun. He himself often brought the wood for his sacrifice, and his own hand he would lift to slay the victim. Once he was seen thus worshipping in the open air under a pelting rain, to avert an unfruitful season. The zeal of the imperial convert astonished even those who were born pagans, and, according to Ammianus Marcellinus, many were apprehensive that, if he returned victorious from the war against the Persians, there would be a great scarcity of meat.[2] Equally ridiculous to many of the enlightened pagans seemed his constant recourse to soothsayers, augurs, and other impostors. But no man, though he may be at war with his age, whether by being behind it or by being before it, can altogether escape its influence, any more than he can leap beyond his shadow.

[1] Soc. iii. 16. So the Galileans had not been barbarians during the preceding centuries. Julian's measure was an acknowledgment that they were not, and a proclamation of his desire that such they should become.

[2] [xxv. 4.]

From the religion he despised, the Emperor borrowed institutions which he was wise enough to perceive had exercised a powerful influence on the nations. He ordered the erection of hospitals for the poor and for strangers. The progress of Christianity, he said, was due in great measure to the hypocritical assumption by its professors of a worthy life, and the beneficence they showed, not only to those who were within, but to those who were without. Moreover, he desired that the heathen priesthood, which was far from pure, should henceforth be distinguished, as most of the Christian clergy were, by virtues becoming their sacred profession. There is preserved in Sozomen[1] a remarkable letter, written by Julian to Ursacius, high-priest of Galatia. Here is a passage from it:—

"You must either put them" (the priests of Galatia) "to shame, or try the power of persuasion, or else deprive them of their sacerdotal offices, if they do not, with their wives, their children, and their servants, join in the service of the gods, or if they permit their wives and their sons to disregard the gods, and to prefer impurity to piety. Exhort them not to frequent theatres, not to drink at taverns, and not to engage in any trade or practise any nefarious art. . . . Establish hospitals in every city, so that strangers from neighbouring and foreign countries may reap the benefit of our philanthropy, according to their respective need. I have provided means to meet the necessary expenditure.[2] For, while there are no persons in need among the Jews, and while even the impious Galileans provide not only for those of their own party who are in want, but also for those who hold with us, it would indeed be disgraceful if we were to allow our own people to suffer from poverty."

The Emperor then goes on, entreating the priests to remember that they were worshippers of Ζεὺς ξένιος ["Jupiter, Guardian of strangers"], and not to dishonour his name by neglecting the duty of hospitality.

Still further, Julian enjoined, in imitation of the Christians, that there should be public instruction and preaching for the furtherance of the old religion. As, soon after the Reforma-

[1] v. 16

[2] 30,000 bushels of corn and 60,000 measures of wine were to be sent annually.

tion, Roman Catholicism set itself to emulate Protestantism in pulpit eloquence, so the Emperor, in his time, recognised the importance of popular teaching and exhortation. Priests who were required to study simplicity in private life, appeared in public clothed in rich purple robes and wearing crowns, and, thus arrayed, strove to recommend paganism, which in the schools had been recommended by allegorical interpretations of the ancient myths. Along with preaching there was to be sacred music. Discipline even was administered, sometimes by Julian himself in his quality of *pontifex maximus*.

We know not how long this galvanised paganism would have maintained itself had Julian's reign been prolonged, but it was soon to end. One or two things, however, are still to be noted.

1. There was his extraordinary (as Gibbon calls it) design of rebuilding the temple of Jerusalem. The work, if executed, was to eclipse the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which Constantine had erected on the hallowed spot, previously desecrated by a temple of Venus. Gibbon suggests, in his own way, that Julian desired to vie with a more ancient sovereign than Constantine. "The local and national deity of the Jews," he says, "was sincerely adored by a polytheist, who desired only to multiply the number of the gods; and such was the appetite of Julian for bloody sacrifices, that his emulation might be excited by the piety of Solomon, who had offered, at the feast of the dedication, 22,000 oxen, and 120,000 sheep." At the same time, he acknowledges that "the restoration of the Jewish temple was secretly connected with the ruin of the Christian Church." "The imperial sophist," he says, "would have converted the success of his undertaking into a specious argument against the faith of prophecy, and the truth of revelation."[1] The Jews, then, were exempted from burdensome taxation, and encouraged to take part in this great work, to which a large sum of public money was devoted. Julian's intimate friend, Alypius, who is described as virtuous and learned, was to appear as his representative on the spot, he himself hoping to be present at the consecration. Multitudes of Jews, gathered from all parts of the

[1 *Decline and Fall*, ch. xxiii.]

Empire within the Holy City, which they had long been forbidden to visit, entered on the work with passionate zeal. "In this propitious moment," says the historian, "the men forgot their avarice, and the women their delicacy; spades and pickaxes of silver were provided by the vanity of the rich, and the rubbish was transported in mantles of silk and purple. Every purse was opened in liberal contributions, every hand claimed a share in the pious labour; and the commands of a great monarch were executed by the enthusiasm of a whole people."[1] And what was the result? According to the testimony of one contemporaneous Christian author, the almighty arm of the Lord by whirlwind, earthquake, and fire, stayed the builders, so that they laboured in vain. A luminous cross was at the same time seen in the heavens, and crosses even were impressed on the garments of those present, and shone by night, and would not wash out. That some fanciful additions should be made—possibly, first of all, by Jews, who, fleeing from the scene affrighted and bewildered, were not in their senses—is not at all surprising; but the testimony of the author so often quoted, Ammianus Marcellinus, to the main fact, though attempts have sometimes been made to weaken it, cannot be set aside. He says:—

"Cum itaque rei fortiter instaret Alypius, juvaretque provinciæ rector, metuendi globi flammarum prope fundamenta crebris assultibus erumpentes, fecere locum exustis aliquotiès operantibus inacessum: hocque modo elemento destinatius repellente cessavit inceptum."[2] The eruption of those terrible globes of flame would doubtless be accompanied with an earthquake (σεισμός). "At this important crisis," says Gibbon, "any singular accident of nature would assume the appearance and produce the effects of a prodigy." Substitute for "accident" the word "event," and those who believe that all natural events are ordered by an overruling providence will not be over anxious to establish the miraculous character of

[1] [*Decline and Fall*, ch. xxiii.]

[2] ["When, therefore, Alypius entered boldly on the affair, and the governor of the province afforded his help, terrible balls of fire, breaking forth near the foundations, made the place impossible of access to the often-scorched workers: and in this way, the element most determinedly driving them back, the undertaking dropped."—*Ammian. Marc.* xxiii. 1.]

the occurrence, which, however, many Christian writers do maintain. In commencing such a building none could express the cost in denarii. There were hidden forces which money and power could not overcome.

2. Upon resolving to undertake the war against Persia, in which he perished, Julian betook himself to Antioch. In the neighbourhood of this city, at a delightful spot called Daphne (so named from the daughter of the River Ladon; here, according to the fable, she was metamorphosed when fleeing from Apollo), there was a sacred cypress-grove, with a statue of Apollo and a magnificent temple, supposed to have been built by the father of Antiochus. Opposite the temple, Gallus, the brother of Julian, had erected a Christian church, and had deposited in it the bones of Babylas, a Christian martyr. From that day the oracle of Apollo was dumb, and Julian believed that it was the presence of the martyr's bones that had caused the silence. But the removal of these relics excited great commotion and indignation among the Christians. Old men and maidens, young men and children, marched in procession after the remains. They sang as they went, and this was the burden of their song: "Confounded are all they who serve graven images, who boast themselves of idols." What a contrast between this enthusiasm and the desolation which Julian had witnessed at the temple of Daphne, where no hand stirred to kindle incense, and no sacrifice was brought save that of a goose by a solitary priest!

The conduct of the Christians—irritating, doubtless, but provoked, it ought to be remembered, by an act as grossly tyrannical as it was grossly superstitious — the Emperor avenged by ordering the apprehension of a number of the offenders. One of these, a young man named Theodore, was tortured, but, when lacerated with iron nails, he seemed insensible to pain, and began to sing again from the ninety-seventh psalm. This fortitude impressed the prefect, who, though a pagan, had at the first attempted to dissuade his imperial master from seizing the Christians, and who now successfully recommended their liberation, boldly declaring that, by such measures, the heathen party was exposed to ridicule, and the Christians acquired glory and reputation.

But meanwhile fire had broken out in the temple of Daphne,

and the naked walls had alone escaped the conflagration. This occurrence, which naturally brought suspicion on the Christians, although the explanation that some of them gave was that the prayers of the martyr had drawn down fire from heaven upon the demon, might have been used as a fair pretext for a bloody persecution; but in the meantime, though possibly more cruel measures would have followed had he returned from the expedition on which he was now intent, the chief way in which the Emperor showed his displeasure was by ordering the destruction of a Christian church at Miletus, which happened, like the church at Daphne, to stand in the neighbourhood of a temple dedicated to Apollo.[1]

In the war against the Persians the fortune of arms was at first propitious to Julian. The proud conqueror of the barbarians of the west saw cities and fortresses fall before him in the east. But when he had advanced as far as Ktesiphon, want of provisions, and the approach of the hostile army under King Sapor, compelled him to retreat along the Tigris. Exposed to thickening danger, he naturally fell a prey to anxiety, and one night, when the end was near, he saw the genius of the Empire in a funereal veil enter his hut and then slowly recede. Starting from a sleep troubled and easily broken—not like that which was soon to end for him life's fitful fever—he hastened forth into the cool air, and, looking up, saw a fiery meteor cross the sky and suddenly disappear. It was the frown of Mars. Soon after, the brave prince, foremost in every danger, and most patient under every fatigue, was, after a gallantly fought battle, and while he was leading and urging on the pursuit of the flying foe, so deeply wounded by a javelin that, as he attempted to extract it, he fainted, and fell from his horse. On recovering his consciousness in a hut to which he had been borne, he was eager to renew the fight, and called for his horse, but he soon learned from his surgeons that his wound was deadly. If we are to believe Ammianus, who was in the Emperor's body-guard, Julian delivered a

[1] "During the licentious days of the Saturnalia," says Gibbon, "the streets of the city" [Antioch] "resounded with insolent songs, which derided the laws, the religion, the personal conduct, and even the beard of the Emperor;" and Julian's *Misopogon* ["Hater of the Beard"—of philosophers, who wore beards] was an "ironical confession of his own faults, and a severe satire of the licentious and effeminate manners of Antioch."—[Ch. xxiv.]

characteristic address before he expired. What Schaff says of it—"It reminds one of the last hours of Socrates, without the natural simplicity of the original, and with a strong admixture of self-complacence and theatrical affectation"—is scarcely so severe as Gibbon's note: "The character and situation of Julian might countenance the suspicion that he had previously composed the elaborate oration which Ammianus heard and has transcribed."[1] As there certainly have been theatrical death-scenes in the course of history, and as Julian's death-scene was unquestionably one of them, it is impossible to say that such a suspicion is purely gratuitous; but the probability is that the dying warrior uttered some broken sentences, which his admiring friend afterwards connected and amplified in a style too pompous and rhetorical for the occasion. That among these broken sentences occurred the words *νενίκηκας Γαλιλαῖε* ("O Galilean, Thou hast conquered!") does not rest on any satisfactory evidence, and does not well harmonise with the narrative of Ammianus, which is continued up to the time when the Emperor, on the following midnight, asked for water, and, having drunk it, expired.[2]

Many stories were told to show that the death of Julian was not only a Divine judgment, but had been pronounced as such. Thus, in Sozomen,[3] it is said that Didymus of Alexandria, when in a trance, before the news of Julian's death could have reached that city, beheld white horses traversing the air, and heard a voice saying to the riders, "Go and tell Didymus that Julian has just been slain; and let him arise and eat, and communicate this intelligence to Athanasius the bishop." Again, Julian boasted to an ecclesiastic that, on the termination of the war, he would treat the Christians with so much severity that the Son of the carpenter would be unable to aid them; whereupon the ecclesiastic rejoined that the Son of the carpenter was then preparing him a coffin.[4] On the other hand, many, without the slightest ground, alleged that the Emperor had fallen by the treacherous hand of a Christian assassin. Libanius marvelled that his gods, who had allowed

[1] [Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, vol. ii. p. 58; *Decline and Fall*, ch. xxiv.; *Ammian. Marc.* xxv. 3.]

[2] 27th June, 363 A.D.

[3] *Hist. Eccles.* vi. 2.

[4] This story is variously told.

Constantius to reign twenty years, had allowed Julian to reign scarcely twenty months.

Probably many a Christian, when the tidings of the death came, exclaimed, "O Galilean, Thou hast conquered!" and not without emotion would it be heard over the Church that the great apostate was buried where the great apostle was born. From Tarsus had come the man through whom, above all, the Galilean had conquered in the beginning of the Church's history. Had Julian only seen in his early life more of the spirit of Paul, and of the Galilean whom Paul preached, he might have looked on Christianity with other eyes; or, if he had not, we should have more sympathy with the early writers who denounced him as Antichrist and the son of perdition. But even those who extol Julian as in many respects comparable with the greatest that had worn the purple, do not now, at least, acquit him of folly in his entering on a religious struggle which could not prosper. And what, after all, was it? It is here we have the chief conquest of the Galilean to celebrate. Before Julian's day the Church had endured the eager, bitter air of a long cruel winter; this was but the frost of a spring morning, and, though some buds were nipped, all men might know that the summer was nigh. Before his time the Church had seen the heavens blackened, no ray appearing for a long season; but this, said the great Bishop, who lived more years a banished, wandering, suffering saint than the Emperor reigned months—this was only a cloud which soon passeth away. Or if we look to the later centuries, what was that pagan reaction compared with the assaults of the encyclopædists, the scandals of the pornocracy, or, nearer Julian's day, the widespread invasion of Mohammedanism, which erected its temple on Mount Moriah? A deep hidden force scattered the builders of the fourth century, offering to all time coming, in the visionary, baseless fabric, an emblem of the perilous, hopeless enterprise to which the Emperor had set himself as the task of his life.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE CHRISTIANS IN THE TIMES OF JOVIAN, VALENTINIAN, AND GRATIAN.

JULIAN, with whom the dynasty founded by Constantine the Great was extinguished, had not nominated a successor. The general Jovian, who is usually described as a weak but well-disposed "Christian," was chosen by the army. The war with Persia was terminated by a peace often called ignominious, because it was most disadvantageous. Five provinces, won by Galerius, and also the city Nisibis, were surrendered. "The peace," says Gibbon, "was inglorious, but perhaps necessary." When the banner of the cross was once more displayed at the head of the legions, great anxiety seized the minds of the heathens. They shut their temples, and their priests, from fear of reprisal, hid themselves. But there were not wanting Christian clergymen who exhorted their flocks to show by their moderation that they had improved the visitation of the last reign, and by no means to return evil for evil. Jovian himself restrained his Christian subjects, and proclaimed the principle of toleration which Constantine had adopted at the beginning of his reign. He issued an edict in which he declared that all the rites of the ancient religion would be permitted, the sacrilegious rites of magic excepted. For this he was warmly eulogised by the pagan orator Themistius when he appeared before him as a deputy representing the senate of Constantinople. From the speech delivered on that occasion Gibbon extracts the "just observation" that, "in the recent changes, both religions had been alternately disgraced by the seeming acquisition of worthless proselytes, of those votaries of the reigning purple, who could pass, without a reason, and without a blush, from the Church to the

temple, and from the altars of Jupiter to the sacred table of the Christians."[1]

Jovian died unexpectedly at a small town between Ancyra and Nice in February, 364 A.D., after a reign of only eight months. In his place, after a vacancy of ten days, came the choice of the civil and military authorities assembled at Nice —the Pannonian, Valentinian, who accepted his brother Valens as his colleague. Valentinian had been a distinguished soldier, and, though he had brought himself into disgrace with Julian by showing a contempt for that Emperor's religion,[2] he had been retained in the service, and had extended his reputation. But when raised to the purple, whatever his contempt for the ancient superstition, and however imperious and despotic his nature might be, he showed his wisdom by tolerating the Pagans beside the Christians, to whom, however, their former immunities and privileges were now fully restored; and not less, assuredly, did he show his wisdom by the neutrality which, though he was himself an adherent of the Nicene Creed, he observed with regard to the Trinitarian Controversy, while his brother Valens, who was a bigoted and uncompromising Arian, persecuted in the east, not only the Catholics, but the intermediate party, which had been gradually approaching them. In one of Valentinian's edicts (368 A.D.) occurs for the first time the expression *religio paganorum*.[3] It is remarkable that, so soon after the reign of Julian, and none the later, doubtless, because violent measures of persecution had been adopted, the old religion had its votaries, generally speaking, among the villagers and peasantry.[4] Upon the whole, the principles of toleration toward the *pagani* were followed at this time in the east as well as the west.[5]

These principles were also followed during part of the

[1] [*Decline and Fall*, chap. xxv.] Jovian erected a monument to Julian at Tarsus.

[2] Once, when obliged to accompany Julian into a temple, he struck a priest who ventured to purify him with lustral water, or tore off his garment. Ammianus praises Valentinian for his neutrality in religion.

[3] "Pagani" occurs three years earlier in a non-official document.

[4] Compare "heathen" from "heath."

[5] Valentinian, however, passed a law against divination. During his reign and that of his brother, Basil and Gregory Nazianzen corresponded on most friendly terms with Libanius and Sophronius.

reign of Gratian (375–383 A.D.), who, at the early age of seventeen, succeeded his father, Valentinian.

The new Emperor, however, was soon brought under the powerful influence of the famous Ambrose, who, though he disapproved of bloodshed for the maintenance of the true faith, did not hold the principle of religious equality. But, strictly speaking, as regards pagans,—the same cannot be said as regards heretics,—we can lay to Gratian's charge nothing that can justly be called a violation of that principle of toleration, unless it be the prohibition of bloody sacrifices. He refused, and is said to have been the first emperor that refused, to assume the garb of *pontifex maximus*, and, as far as it was found practicable (there were some heathen festivities for which funds were still paid out of the treasury) withdrew public support from temples and priests and the vestal virgins.[1] With his withdrawal of public support from paganism is to be noticed his removal from the senate-house of the statue and altar of the goddess Victoria, which were highly revered in the world-conquering city, and before which the senators were wont to swear. The altar had been removed in the time of Constantius, but had been restored by Julian. But in the senate there were still many heathens, and they could not submit to what they deemed an act of outrageous impiety without raising a vigorous protest. They sent the most distinguished of their number—Quintus Aurelius Symmachus—to remonstrate with the Emperor on the matter, and generally on his measures of antagonism to the old religion. On the other hand, the Christian party were not inactive. They had the powerful argument to urge,[2] that they formed the majority, and they complained accordingly of the step taken by their heathen colleagues as unwarrantable and factious. Their cause was advocated by Damasus, Bishop of Rome, and by a man whose personal fame was greater still—Ambrose, Bishop

[1] "By this step," says Schaff [*History of the Christian Church*, vol. ii. p. 62], "heathenism became, like Christianity before Constantine, and now in the American Republic, dependent on the voluntary system, while, unlike Christianity, it had no spirit of self-sacrifice, no energy of self-preservation. The withdrawal of the public support cut its life string, and left it still to exist for a time by *vis inertiæ* alone."

[2] According to one account, but very doubtful.

of Milan. The Emperor was so indignant at the opposition that he refused an audience to Symmachus and the members of the illustrious old families that accompanied him. A famine which broke out in the following year was naturally interpreted by the defeated party as a punishment inflicted by the gods for the neglect of their worship, and when Valentinian II. succeeded his deceased brother Gratian, a new attempt was made to raise again the fallen religion. Symmachus, who had meanwhile become prefect of the city, was chosen as the organ of the senate, and the advocate of the gods. In a petition which he addressed to the new Emperor, he counselled him to distinguish his personal religion from the *religio urbis* (the "religion of the city"); he was far from questioning his right as an individual to embrace the Christian faith, but he urged him to allow the Romans to retain possession of their ancient temples and altars and privileges. Since the human mind could never reach certainty in matters of religion, it was well to respect custom, and continue the observance of those rites which were recommended by a hoary antiquity, and in following which the city had prospered and achieved the conquest of the world. In the course of the address the goddess Roma herself, the genius of the city, is introduced to plead with the young Emperor.[1] "Most excellent princes," said the goddess, "fathers of your country, pity and respect my age, which has hitherto flowed in an uninterrupted course of piety. Since I do not repent, permit me to continue in the practice of my ancient rites. Since I was born free, allow me to enjoy my domestic institutions. This religion has reduced the world under my laws. These rites have repelled Hannibal from the city and the Gauls from the capital. Were my grey hairs reserved for such intolerable disgrace? I am ignorant of the new system that I am required to adopt; but I am well assured that the correction of old age is always an ungrateful and ignominious office."

An established system, it has been said by a writer who does not disapprove of a connection between Church and State, is the natural refuge of probabilism. Unbelief, of a kind the most *blasé*, will often seek repose in the orthodoxy of the State.

[1] Though the plural is used; Theodosius was Emperor in the east from the death of Valens at Adrianople, 378 A.D.

It is said that the representations of Symmachus, who on all sides is extolled as a man of virtue, weight, and eloquence, made an impression on Valentinian II., and that they were seconded by some pagan friends who were honoured with the sovereign's confidence. But the vigilant Ambrose was at hand to plead on the other side, and, according to Gibbon, he speaks well when he "condescends to speak the language of a philosopher"—when he asks why it should be thought necessary to introduce an imaginary and invisible power as the cause of those victories which were sufficiently explained by the valour and discipline of the legions, and when he derides the absurd reverence for antiquity, which could only tend to discourage the improvements of art, and to re-plunge the human race into their original barbarism. But Ambrose used other arguments, which can no more be regarded as purely theological than those mentioned by Gibbon. He contrasted the power and growth of persecuted Christianity in the past centuries with the weakness and decay of privileged paganism, and he also reminded the Emperor that the nations subdued by Rome had been not less addicted to idolatry than Rome herself. On this occasion, too, Ambrose uttered the memorable and often quoted saying, which may be legitimately applied over a wide enough field, but may be too easily perverted to defend any act of tyranny perpetrated in the Divine name: "No man is wronged when the Almighty God is preferred to him."

Ambrose was successful. Valentinian II. refused to comply with the petition, and, through the same potent influence, the result was similar when application was made to Theodosius in 388 or 389 A.D.

CHAPTER XL.

THEODOSIUS.

Upon the death of Valens in the fatal battle of Adrianople, fought against the Goths in the year 378 A.D., the orthodox Church in the east, the Homoousians, and the Semi-Arians, who were now showing a disposition to unite with them, were delivered from an oppressor, and the whole Empire passed under the sway of Gratian. His younger brother, Valentinian II., was but seven years of age. The oriental part of the Empire was threatened by barbarians on every side. Gratian looked about for an able colleague, and his choice fell on Theodosius, who, when invested with the purple, took his seat in Thessalonica, being entrusted with the administration of the east, and the eastern part of Illyricum.

Theodosius, like many other great personages (not to go out of his own century, we can say like Athanasius and Chrysostom and Julian), was a man who knew the extremes of fortune. His father, a brave general, whose name was likewise Theodosius, had served in Britain, and had acquired the fame of a second Agricola. Under him the young Theodosius had also distinguished himself in that island, where, as you remember, Constantine had been proclaimed at the beginning of the century. He, indeed, is often called the Second Constantine. After his father's return, he became intimately acquainted with Gratian during the lifetime of Valentinian I., and he rose step by step, till at last he was appointed governor of Moesia. His father was sent to quell a revolt in Africa, which he succeeded in doing after a struggle of several years; but in 376 A.D., the year immediately following Gratian's accession, he fell a victim to court cabals, and was executed at Carthage. The son was constrained to return to Spain, his native country, and there he spent several years in

rural solitude. But when Gratian was in straits in consequence of the fatal war with the Goths, he remembered the brave and deeply wronged friend of his youth, who now, called from his seclusion, rendered such eminent services as a warrior and a ruler that he has been called "The Great." He became colleague in 379 A.D. He was the last great Emperor, and, notwithstanding the measures he took for the suppression of heathenism, was so popular with the Roman Senate that it is sometimes said that, after his death, they enrolled him among the gods.

It was many years, however, before Theodosius became sole Emperor. Shortly after his elevation, Maximus, his compatriot and old comrade in arms when the Picts and Scots were invading the Roman territory in Britain, was proclaimed by his troops, who were dissatisfied with Gratian. The latter, whose residence in the last years of his life was at Treves, advanced to meet him; but, having been betrayed and forsaken, he was obliged to fly, and, having been overtaken at Lyons, was put to death. For some time Theodosius, who was busy in the east, recognised his old companion as his colleague, but on condition that the minor, Valentinian II., should be left undisputed in Milan as Emperor over Italy, Africa, and the western portion of Illyricum. The condition was observed for only two or three years. Maximus crossed the Alps in 386 A.D. Justina, the mother of Valentinian II., fled to Theodosius, accompanied by her daughter Galla, as well as by her son. The tears and entreaties of Galla touched the Emperor so deeply that he not only promised to be her avenger, but became her husband. In the war which ensued the usurper and invader was unsuccessful. His generals were defeated, and he himself was taken prisoner before Aquileia, and was put to death by the soldiers (388 A.D.). Four years after, Valentinian II., who had thought his general Arbogast too imperious, and wished to remove him, was murdered, at the age of twenty, when taking a solitary walk on the banks of the Rhone. For about two years a pagan, Eugenius, who was supported by Arbogast, wore the purple. When Theodosius, therefore, marched against him, he was regarded, not only as the avenger of his brother-in-law, but as the champion of Christianity. When the first battle was fought,

and victory seemed to incline rather to the side of the usurper, some of the Emperor's bravest counsellors advised him to retreat, but he declared it was not fit that the cross of Christ on his standard should flee before Hercules and Jupiter on the banners of the foe. Resolving to renew the battle next day, he spent most of the night, we are told, in prayer, and then—nothing so remarkable, certainly, as in the case of Constantine; you may think rather of Peter and Paul hovering over Leo the Great with threatening swords when he had power with Attila and his Huns—towards the morning of the critical day he had a dream, in which two white horsemen, the apostles John and Philip, appeared to him, and promised him the victory. The victory was his. Theodosius had great generals under him, two distinguished Goths, Gainas and Alaric, among them; but what helped him most was a mighty wind from the Alps, which blew snow and dust into the faces of his enemies. Eugenius was taken and beheaded, and Arbogast fled to the mountains, and then killed himself. A remarkable result of the victory was that a great number of patrician families, including the Anicii (from whom Benedict and Gregory sprang), immediately adopted the Christian faith. Theodosius was now (394 A.D.) sole Emperor, but, during many of the preceding years, as may be understood from his relation to Valentinian II., his power had been great in the west as well as in the east.

But, illustrious as were the services which Theodosius rendered to the Roman Empire, it is impossible to defend the measures he took for the suppression of the ancient religion. I do not now speak of his taming heresy and schism. It is painful to say in explanation that those measures may have been—there is too much reason to suspect that they were—adopted in great part under the inspiration of a man whose name is not less celebrated than his own—the Bishop of Milan, whose influence over him has already been noticed, and was, we know, in one remarkable instance, certainly exercised with the best results. There is on record, however, a scarcely less remarkable instance of a different kind. During a winter which Theodosius spent in Milan, about the year 388 A.D., the news came that a somewhat serious collision had taken place between the Jews and the Christians at a small town in

Mesopotamia, called Callinikum. A body of fanatical Christians had burned the synagogue there, and this crime, it was alleged, had been committed at the instigation of the Bishop. The Emperor sent orders to the Bishop to have the synagogue rebuilt. No sooner did this come to the knowledge of Ambrose than he hastened to obtain a revocation of the righteous command, and represented to Theodosius, in strong language, that the Bishop would be guilty of treason to the Christian faith if, obeying, he erected a new synagogue instead of that which had been destroyed. Whether the Bishop had instigated the crime or not was of no consequence. That a crime had been committed Ambrose did not question; but it would be a triumph for the enemies of Christ, and a disgrace to the Church, if reparation were made in the way the Emperor desired. The command might be in accordance with human laws, but there were higher laws than human, which forbade the execution of it. This was assuredly very dangerous ground to take in a case where it was granted that human laws were agreeable to the natural sense of justice. But, still further to impress and terrify Theodosius, Ambrose reminded him of Julian, who had encouraged the Jews to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem, and of the fire which God had sent upon the builders to punish their audacious impiety. These and other arguments that were advanced failed to satisfy the Emperor, but the Bishop carried the matter to the pulpit, and preached against his sovereign in his presence. He had preached, not against, but for him, he said when remonstrance was made. With an earnest, pathetic eloquence, which characterised him as much when he was in the wrong as when he was in the right, he continued to press the Emperor till he gained his point, and the command, which had not erred on the side of severity, was revoked. It is lamentable to find that the great Ambrosius, one of the few who raised their voice in solemn protest when the blood of heretics was shed for the first time in the history of the Church,[1]

[1] Priscillian and some of his followers were put to death in 385 A.D. ["They enjoined, or recommended, a total abstinence from all animal food; and their continual prayers, fasts, and vigils inculcated a rule of strict and perfect devotion. The speculative tenets of the sect concerning the person of Christ and the nature of the human soul, were derived from the Gnostic and Manichæan system."—*Decline and Fall*, chap. xxvii. "Much licentiousness was acknowledged

was so far from having reached the height on the question of religious liberty which Constantine appeared to have attained in 313 A.D., but which he had attained only in theory.

But if Ambrose's idea of toleration was far from high, he upon the whole represented the better and the less violent divines of his age. And if he is to be held as inspiring the persecuting measures of the Emperor, with equal justice may we recognise in a great degree his influence, or, at all events, see nothing at variance with his principles, in the limits which his powerful sovereign, as is often mentioned with commendation, set to his religious zeal. Thus, as it is put in one word by Schaff:—

"Theodosius by no means pressed the execution of his laws in places where the heathen party retained considerable strength; he did not exclude heathens from public office, and allowed them at least full liberty of thought and speech. His countryman, the Christian poet, Prudentius, states with approbation, that in the distribution of secular offices he looked not at religion, but at merit and talent, and raised the heathen Symmachus to the dignity of consul."[1] To this it may be added that Libanius was prefect of the palace at Constantinople, and that Themistius, besides holding the prefecture of that city, had charge of the education of Arcadius. Their sentiments were well known, and there was no law of Theodosius compelling them to abjure paganism, or to receive Christian baptism.

But what were his persecuting measures? The first I have seen mentioned is somewhat singular, and is sometimes taken as an indication that strong influence—Neo-platonic, no doubt—was employed, twenty years after the death of Julian, to proselytise to paganism. In 381 A.D. Theodosius withdrew from those who apostatised from Christianity to heathenism the right to make wills.[2] A year earlier he had

by their leaders, notwithstanding a profession of asceticism in some particulars. . . . There is much obscurity, however, as to the exact tenets" (of the sect), "and they died out altogether during the fifth century."—Blunt, *Dict. of Doct. and Hist. Theol.*, art. "Priscillianists."]

[1] [*History of the Christian Church*, vol. ii. p. 64.]

[2] The conjecture (Athanasius and Theodoret) of an alliance between Arians and pagans under Valens, which forced the orthodox to apostatise is unfounded. The Arians were at least as violently opposed to idolatry as the orthodox. Many had been baptized with precipitation. Above all, there were neophytes

issued an edict requiring that criminal processes should be suspended during Lent. Then, again, in common with Gratian, he forbade sacrifice so far as it was resorted to for purposes of magic and divination, which he regarded as dangerous to the State.[1] In 391 A.D. he prohibited worship in heathen temples, though their destruction was not then sanctioned, and, in the following year, all kinds of pagan rites, private as well as public, were forbidden, and sacrifice was declared to be a *crimen majestatis*. In this year, too, combats of the amphitheatre and games of the circus were prohibited on Sunday, except when the anniversary of the Emperor's birth fell on that day.

But the prohibition of sacrifices offered for the purpose of magic or divination was in many places carried far beyond the letter. Along with magic and divination fell sacrifices in general, and along with the sacrifices, altars, and along with the altars, the buildings in which they stood. As in the former century, it frequently happened that, without waiting for the authority of kings and rulers, the heathen raged, and, in their blind fury, surrounded the buildings in which, as they said, the atheists met to celebrate their nefarious rites, so now the same unbridled zeal was manifested by the Christians in the destruction of heathen temples. In the east especially the odious sanctuaries of the gods, the habitations of demons, as they were regarded, were stormed, destroyed and plundered by the populace, at whose head marched fanatical monks, armed with axes and crowbars—"men," said the famous teacher whose lectures Julian had devoured in secret, "in black clothes, as voracious as elephants, and insatiably thirsty, but concealing their sensuality under an artificial paleness."[2] Bishops sometimes gave the word that set an iconoclastic army in motion, and sometimes headed it in person. Priests who took no part were silent for fear of their life. As was

who did not reap the advantages they expected from their new profession. Many of the rich had undergone baptism to enjoy the exemption from curia granted by Constantine to the clergy, but a law of Valentinian required the rich, before entering into holy orders, to give up their property to the curia, or to some person who would bear state burdens. In 383 A.D. the right of inheriting was taken from apostates.

[1] Sacrifice for divination had been previously prohibited in the same year (385) by a less severe law.

[2] Quoted by Schaff [*History of Christian Church*, vol. ii. p. 65].

to be expected, violence was soon shown on the other side also. The heathens, who compared the brutal fury of their enemies with that of the Titans who invaded heaven, determined to have their revenge, and, in places where they were strong enough to use force, retaliated for the crimes of which their co-religionists elsewhere were the victims. Christian churches at Gaza, Ascalon, and Berytus were destroyed. At Apamea, in Syria, there was a temple of Jupiter, which had the right of asylum. As it was sought by many pilgrims, interest, as well as superstition, roused the heathen against Marcellus, the bishop of the place, who caused fire to be set to the pieces of wood which supported its pillars. While the monks and soldiers went to demolish another temple, he was surprised by mountaineers from Lebanon, whom the Apameans had called to their aid. It is said that his sons did not seek vengeance, accounting him happy in having died for the cause of God.[1] It was after a magnificent temple on the borders of Persia had been destroyed that Libanius made his famous appeal to the Emperor. It was entitled, "On behalf of the Temples" (*ὑπὲρ τῶν ἱερῶν*). In this appeal he justly complained of violence such as Constantine would never have tolerated, and which Theodosius himself had not authorised. Sound principles were advocated by Symmachus and Libanius when the Christians were abusing their power, just as they had been advocated by Athanasius and Hilary when an Arian emperor persecuted the adherents of the Nicene creed. But strong representations of a different kind were addressed to the Emperor by bishops, and, as he himself contemplated the entire extinction of idolatry, though he had not commanded the demolition of its temples, he did not take any decided steps for the restraint or the punishment of his Christian subjects who had been guilty of violence and bloodshed. On the other hand it is mentioned that the burning of the Bishop of Apamea was allowed to pass with impunity. In the year 393 A.D., however, Theodosius issued a law against those who, in the name of Christianity, set themselves to the demolition of the Jewish synagogues.

The occurrences at Alexandria at this period are particularly noteworthy. In this city, where paganism had many

[1] Sozomen; Theodoret.

highly cultivated adherents, as well as magnificent temples, and where the Neo-platonic philosophy had one of its principal seats, there stood at the head of the Church a man whose character was thoroughly unspiritual, and who is described by Gibbon, not unjustly, it is admitted, as "a bold, bad man, whose hands were alternately polluted with gold and with blood."[1] The Emperor presented this bishop, whose name was Theophilus, with a temple of Bacchus, that he might convert it into a Christian church. Instead of quietly destroying the heathen symbols which he found there, and some of which could not be exhibited in public without gross indecency, he caused them to be borne in procession through the streets, and exposed to the derision of the Christian populace. The heathens, infuriated, banded together under a philosopher called Olympius, and attacked the Christians, wounding and killing a considerable number.[2] On a height stood the colossal temple of Serapis, one of the proudest and most magnificent monuments of pagan architecture, and second only to that of Jupiter Capitolinus in the capital. Thither the heathens betook themselves, and, having turned the sacred edifice into a camp, they sallied forth from time to time upon the Christians, and forced their prisoners, by torture, to sacrifice, or, if they refused, put them to death. The sufferers were called martyrs by their friends, but, upon the whole, this was by no means the pure and glorious martyrdom of the days when, if the rose as well as the lily (to recall Cyprian's figure) was in the garland which adorned the Church's head, it was to the blood of her members only, and in no degree to that of her adversaries, that she owed her diadem of beauty.

For a long time all attempts of the civil and military authorities to restore order and peace in the city were defeated by the obstinate and exasperated resistance of the pagans. At last, force proving ineffectual, the Emperor proclaimed an amnesty, hoping, according to the historian Sozomen, by his great leniency to soften the rebels and convert them to the

[1] [*Decline and Fall*, chap. xxviii.]

[2] The heathens were infuriated also by the exposure of the tricks of their priests. Secret openings, which afforded an entrance for those who delivered oracles, were found on the statues.

truth.[1] The condition of the pardon, of course, was the immediate abandonment of the Serapion. But the Emperor sent to Evagrius, the prefect of Egypt, and Romanus, military count, a copy of the edict requiring the cessation of sacrifice and the closing of the temples. When the edict was read in public, shouts of victory arose from the Christians. But they went far beyond the written command. It was resolved to begin with the temple within which the idolaters had entrenched themselves. Great crowds collected round it, but no hand, we are told, was ready to strike the first blow, for there went an old saying, which now for a time had a paralysing effect upon the Christians, that, when the statue of the god fell, the heavens themselves would fall. But at length a soldier, rising above the feeling of superstitious awe, ventured to smite the colossal jaw-bone of the divinity with an axe, and, amid loud cries, the wailing of the heathen mingling with the exultant shouts of the Christians, the statue fell. According to the account of Theodoret, there came forth from the hollow head of the prostrate god a multitude of mice. There are, however, better authenticated accounts of such things happening when the votaries of superstition expected that the heavens would fall, or at least that lightning would come from above, the humiliating reality offering an image that has been sometimes used, I think, of the shame and contempt awaiting the vile and contemptible which, under a magnificent and imposing exterior, overawes the mind and imagination of men, it may be of many generations. One of the most remarkable cases of this kind occurred in Norway in the beginning of the eleventh century, when a powerful stroke, which a man of gigantic strength inflicted at the command of the sovereign, brought down the statue of the god Thor, and, to the great astonishment of the people—to the confusion of many—there crept forth from the interior of the venerated image, mice, rats, and lizards.

The work of destruction went on, not only in the city, but in its environs. Some of the temples, however, were not thrown down, but changed into Christian churches and cloisters. A copious inundation of the Nile in the same year

[1] VII. 15. [τοὺς δὲ ἀνελόντας, συγγνώμης τυχεῖν προσέταξεν, ὡς ἂν ῥᾷστα εἰς χριστιανισμὸν μεταβάλοιεν.]

(391 A.D.) was held as a decisive proof that the gods of Egypt, and Serapis in particular, had no power to avenge the ignominious treatment they had suffered.

Schaff notices that, though men of another character than Theophilus—even such men as Martin of Tours—were active in the work of destruction, yet important protests were heard from the Church "against this pious vandalism." He mentions, however, only two such protests, and, though one of them [1] may be allowed to stand, it is difficult to see how the second passage he quotes can be regarded in such a light. It is from the pen of the great Bishop of Hippo, and runs thus: "Let us first obliterate the idols in the hearts of the heathen, and once they become Christians they will either themselves invite us to the execution of so good a work" [the destruction of the idols], "or anticipate us in it. Now we must pray for them, and not exasperate them." But we know how Augustine acted toward the Donatists and the Pelagians, whom, in the first instance, he was most solicitous to gain by argument and persuasion; and, moreover, Schaff himself admits that the Bishop is not quite consistent, "for he commended the severe laws of the Emperors against idolatry." But in the passage itself, though he points out the more excellent way, he by no means says, or even seems to imply, that the work of demolition, if the heathen neglected it, or did not invite to it, might not be righteously performed by the Christians.[2] We should require strong evidence before we could believe that this truly illustrious man, who, with a deplorable perversity, which is more saddening in him than in the illustrious Marcus Aurelius, justified persecution,—even, in some cases, unto death,—ever condemned, or could on any intelligible principle condemn, as sinful, the forcible extermination of paganism with all its monuments.

After the last hope of the heathen had been destroyed by the defeat and execution of Eugenius (394 A.D.), the victorious Emperor entered into Rome, and delivered before the assembled

[1] [By Chrysostom: "Christians are not to destroy error by force and violence, but should work the salvation of men by persuasion, instruction, and love."—*History of the Christian Church*, vol. ii. p. 66.]

[2] "In several letters Augustine complained that the laws against paganism were not enforced with rigour."—*Vide* Schultze [*Geschichte des Untergangs des griechisch-römischen Heidenthums.*]

Senate a powerful speech, in which he exhorted the members of that venerable body to renounce the service of idols, and to adopt the religion in which alone they could find the forgiveness of their sins. "Then," wrote Jerome in one of his epistles, doubtless with some rhetorical exaggeration, "almost all the temples of the capital were abandoned to spoilers, and all the inhabitants hastened to the graves of the martyrs." It would seem almost as if paganism had been utterly extinguished after the last smile of fortune by which its votaries had been gladdened under Eugenius through the restoration, for a brief season, of the altar of Victoria to its former place of honour. Though the extirpation of the old religion was by no means complete, Theodosius, on his death (January 395 A.D.), was not honoured by the Senate with the customary apotheosis. The famous poet of the age, however, Claudian, so far supplied the lack by describing the Emperor's decease as a departure to the gods.

CHAPTER XLI.

ARCADIUS AND HONORIUS.

SHORTLY before his end, Theodosius committed the administration of the east to his son Arcadius, who was only eighteen years of age, and that of the west to Honorius, who was seven years younger. The latter had the great statesman and warrior Stilicho at his side, while the elder brother had Rufinus, a native of Gaul, as his counsellor. To the laws of the previous reign for the suppression of paganism new ones were added, and in his last years, Honorius, contrary to the example which his great father had left him, published an edict by which heathens were excluded from civil and military office: *Nullus nobis sit aliqua ratione conjunctus quia nobis fide et religione discordat* ["Let no one who differs from us in faith and religion be in any way associated with us"[1]]. This measure, however, did not involve the dismissal of those who already held posts of honour.

As for the temples, it would appear that a positive law for their destruction was passed, but was restricted in its operation to the country districts, the sovereign being desirous that the temples in the cities, with their treasures, should be preserved as works of art. Great difficulty, however, was encountered in enforcing the Emperor's enactments, even where they were intended to apply, not so much because the last struggles of heathenism for its existence were in themselves formidable, as because the Empire, particularly in the west, was convulsed by the invasions of the barbarians. It is a curious circumstance that, in one of the persecuting

[1] "But in the first instance only those who were called to serve within the palace must be Christians. Even as to them the law was not enforced with perfect strictness."—Schultze [*Geschichte des Untergangs des griechisch-römischen Heidenthums.* 1ter B. s. 365]. See the context.

edicts issued at this period, the Emperor affected to doubt whether there were any pagans still alive. If it so happened that there were any sorcerers, the law was to be enforced against them: *Paganos qui supersunt, quamquam jam nullos esse credamus* ["That the pagans that survive, although we believe there are now not any"]. But there not only survived here and there a votary of the ancient religion; in some places the heathens were strong enough to murder the Christians when engaged in the work of demolishing the temples and idols. Other causes, however, than the violent measures of the government tended to accelerate the end. We may mention one of a somewhat interesting nature. As appears from the testimony of several writers, there had passed among the heathen a prophecy that the Christian Church would fall three hundred and sixty-five years after the death of its Founder. It is remarkable to find, on the one hand, this prophecy traced, as it has been, not only with ingenuity, but with probability, to a Christian source, and to find, on the other hand, that, at the time foretold, the doom, not of Christianity, but of paganism was sealed. As to the origin of the prophecy, it would seem that some among the Christians had held that "the acceptable year of the Lord" meant a period of three hundred and sixty-five years, and that, when it was completed, there would come the end (of the visible Church), and the kingdom would be delivered up. On the other hand, as to the catastrophe that did take place, though it is impossible to set down the year 398 A.D., or any year, as the prescribed date for the extinction of the pagan religion, yet about that time the impotence of paganism became so manifest that even a widespread reaction, not to say permanent restoration, — even a widespread reaction such as had taken place nearly half a century before, — might be pronounced an impossibility. The last period in the history of its decline and fall begins, we may say, with the time predicted for the destruction of the Church.

In the east, shortly after the word "pagan" came into use, heathenism, when it had lost its hold on the mass of the population scattered over the country and in towns and villages, found its chief place of refuge in the cities. From fallen or forsaken temples it fled to the schools, and fled as a

ghost, so far as it professed to be a religion—a mere lifeless shadow of the paganism which was known in the old times, when the gods, far from being received as mere abstractions, were adored by the multitude in simple faith as being of like passions with themselves, but of greater power.

It is to be regretted that the schools, to which heathenism fled, were not left undisturbed. Nothing, indeed, can be more deplorable than the oft-told story of the martyrdom—for so it may be called—of Hypatia. It occurred, I need not tell you, in Alexandria; but it would be most unjust to judge of the Christian population throughout the world by the barbarous excesses of the excitable populace of that city. It is a great relief to find that it was not left to Christians of later centuries to condemn in the strongest terms the murder of that woman. Socrates, the Christian historian, was about thirty-five years of age when the foul, ruthless deed was perpetrated. Let us first take his account of it:[1]—

"There was a woman at Alexandria named Hypatia, the daughter of the philosopher Theon, who made such attainments in literature and science, as to far surpass all the philosophers of her own time. Having succeeded to the school of Plato and Plotinus, she explained the principles of philosophy to her auditors, many of whom came from a distance to receive her instructions. Such was her self-possession and ease of manner, arising from the refinement and cultivation of her mind, that she not infrequently appeared in public in presence of the magistrates, without ever losing in an assembly of men that dignified modesty of deportment for which she was conspicuous, and which gained for her universal respect and admiration. Yet even she fell a victim to the political jealousy which at that time prevailed. For as she had frequent interviews with Orestes" (the prefect) "it was calumniously reported among the Christian populace that it was by her influence that he was prevented from being reconciled to Cyril. Some of them, therefore, hurried away by a fierce and bigoted zeal, whose ringleader was a reader named Peter,[2] entered into a conspiracy against

[1] VII. 15.

[2] In Alexandria, catechumens (according to Socrates) were sometimes made lectores.

her;[1] and observing her returning in her carriage, they dragged her from it, and carried her to the church called Cæsareum, where they completely stripped her with shells.[2] After tearing her body in pieces, they took her mangled limbs to a place called Cinaron, and there burned them. An act so inhuman could not fail to bring the greatest opprobrium, not only upon Cyril, but also upon the whole Alexandrian Church. And surely nothing can be further from the spirit of Christianity than the allowance of massacres, fights, and transactions of that sort. It was in the season of Lent."

What deepens the blackness of the crime is that Hypatia had shown great benevolence to all around without regard to their religion. Some of the criminals might live long enough to read—they were headed by an *ἀναγνώστης*—this page of the historian, but this kind of punishment, while it is good to find that it was so soon inflicted, did not meet the case, and, even at this distance of time, one blushes to tell that Socrates was unable to add that the Christian government of the day promptly vindicated public justice, and satisfied the public conscience. After describing, quite in accordance with Socrates, the revolting butchery of this illustrious lady in the bloom of her beauty and the maturity of her wisdom, Gibbon adds: "The just progress of inquiry and punishment was stopped by seasonable gifts; but the murder of Hypatia has imprinted an indelible stain on the character and religion of Cyril of Alexandria."[3] The Bishop was charged with the murder by Damascius, one of the "seven wise men" of 529 A.D., and some modern historians[4] ascribe to him the indirect guilt on account of "his persecuting spirit and indecent violence;" but it is to be noted that, when he became a violent controversialist, he was not accused by his most bitter opponents of having committed this crime or of having been accessory to its perpetration.[5]

[1] According to a law of Constantius, persons convicted of magical arts were to be torn by wild beasts and burned. Astronomy, in the eyes of the populace, may have been (in this case) the same as astrology.

[2] Or "tiles"—*ὀστράκοις*. "Her flesh was scraped from her bones with sharp oyster-shells"—Gibbon [who says in a note that "oyster-shells were plentifully strewed on the sea-beach before the Cæsareum"].

[3] [*Decline and Fall*, ch. xlvii.]

[4] Schröckh, Arnold, and others.

[5] Suidas affirms that Hypatia's renown excited the envy of Cyril. An

We had entered the last period in the history of the downfall of paganism within the Roman Empire. It was a somewhat protracted one. The frequent re-enactment of laws by which apostasy from Christianity was punished, these laws extending from the time of Constantine to the year 426 A.D., is a somewhat remarkable fact, as one must naturally suppose that the ostentatious progress of Christianity, as well as its intrinsic excellence, with which all had the opportunity of becoming acquainted, would diminish the temptation to renounce the Christian name. One probable reason for these numerous enactments is that many who, for appearances sake, underwent the rite of baptism,[1] continued in secret to practise heathen rites, and, when they were detected, were called apostates, and, as such, were considered specially obnoxious. In reality, however, the stream was flowing rapidly in the opposite direction. The laws formally enacting the destruction of pagan temples or their appropriation to the purposes of Christian worship, and the cessation of pagan rites even within the domestic sanctuary, were enforced under Valentinian III. (423–455 A.D.), from whose time heathenism maintained only a sporadic existence in some regions of the west—in Rome, Gaul, Upper Italy, Africa, Sicily, and particularly in Corsica, where, as late as the year 440 A.D., if not a few years later, its fanatical adherents crucified a lady named Julia because she refused to take part

embassy to Theodosius II. designated the Parabolani as the author of the tumult. The Parabolani ("paraboles"=a man ready to offer himself to danger) were often of the lowest class. [Those of Alexandria "were a charitable corporation, instituted during the plague of Gallienus to visit the sick and to bury the dead. They gradually enlarged, abused, and sold the privileges of their order."—Gibbon, ch. xlvii., *note*.] "The Parabolani probably thought Hypatia a sorceress, and in their lamentable delusion sought to serve the bishop by delivering him from her arts."

Hypatia was murdered in 415 or 416 A.D. Her death was followed by the decline of the school of Alexandria. Greece had suffered severely from the devastations of Alaric, and had no pupils to send to Athens, which had been itself untouched. Strangers did not visit the city. Synesius compared it with the skin of a sacrificed animal: "The ancient sanctuary of the wise is renowned only among the dealers in honey." But the school of Athens was frequented anew and eclipsed that of Alexandria. Synesius, Bishop of Ptolemais (410), had been a pupil of Hypatia.

[1] Many had undergone baptism in order to escape curia, but a law was passed requiring the rich to give up their wealth before the rite was administered.

in a sacrifice. Long before this time, too, the greatest orator of his day—Cyprian—had declared that the work of conversion in the Empire would have been completed had those who professed adorned the Christian faith. "There would be no heathen," he said, "if we were right Christians; for those whom we instruct look to the character of their instructors, and when they see that we strive after the same things as themselves, that we are as eager in the pursuit of power and honour, how is it possible for them to feel admiration for our religion?"

CHAPTER XLII.

JUSTINIAN.

The last notable measures of imperial rigour in the east are associated with the name of Justinian. That renowned asylum of Neo-platonism, the School of Athens, which had been surrounded with a new lustre by the eloquence of Proclus, was closed by the orders of the Emperor. There happened at this time (529 A.D.) to be exactly seven philosophers there, the last professors of the Hellenic religion in the last of the famous, and the most famous, of the Grecian schools—shades, as they have been called, of the seven wise men of ancient times.[1] Their names have been preserved. They were Damascius (a Syrian), Simplicius (a Cilician), Eulamius (a Phrygian), Priscianus (a Lydian), Hermias and Diogenes (Phœnicians), and Isidore of Gaza. The seven, rather than prove unfaithful to their convictions, left the Empire, and put themselves under the protection of King Chosroes, of Persia. But a measure of still harsher despotism was adopted by Justinian. He pursued paganism into an asylum more sacred than even the most ancient and celebrated of schools. He followed heathens into their homes. Not content with punishing those who were denounced, he directed that offenders against the "religious" laws should be carefully sought out in the capital and throughout the provinces, and compelled, under penalty of death, to receive baptism.

In the west not only legislation, but the fall of the western Empire, had contributed to the overthrow of paganism. In consequence of the long wars which it had to sustain

[1] "A striking play of history, like the name of the last west-Roman Emperor, Romulus Augustus, or, in contemptuous diminutive, Augustulus.'—[Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, vol. ii. p. 68.]

against the barbarians, and of the plagues and famines which accompanied them, its cities and provinces lost a vast multitude of their ancient inhabitants, and the mixed population that took their place, unfettered by old ideas and customs, readily adopted the dominant religion. Some time after the defeat of Alaric at Pollentia in 402 A.D., by the great and valiant general Stilicho, the pompous spectacle of a triumph was for the last time witnessed in the capital. Amid the acclamations of an immense concourse the Emperor Honorius, riding in a magnificent chariot, with the warrior at his side, celebrated the victory by which the fall of the Empire was only retarded. This also, it is said, was the last occasion on which the populace saw the blood of a number of gladiators flow upon the arena. The Emperor, in accordance with the edicts which had long before been published in the interests of religion and humanity, forbade the repetition of those cruel pleasures, and they were now entirely abolished throughout the Empire.[1]

Scarcely had Italy recovered from the terror inspired by the irruption of Alaric, when Radagaisus, at the head of an army of Suevi, Vandals, and Burgundians, descended from the north, and advanced as far as Florence, where the tyrant was arrested and driven back. Once more the country owed its deliverance to the valour of Stilicho; but Honorius, who had removed his seat from Milan, where he was constantly menaced with danger, to Ravenna, situated at the extremity of the Gulf of Venice, and surrounded by impenetrable marshes, sacrificed the man who was the *decus et tutamen* of the empire. He abandoned him to calumniators, who, unable to endure the glory of this foreigner by whom their country had been twice saved, accused him, without any apparent ground, of nursing treasonable projects against his sovereign, and plotting to set his own son, Eucherius, on the throne. Stilicho was surprised and murdered. But the barbarians whom he had vanquished were his avengers. They breathed again. Alaric advanced with his Visigoths from the Alps,

[1] Telemachus, an Asiatic monk, had rushed into the arena to separate the gladiators, and had been stoned to death. Honorius regarded him as a martyr. Whether an edict was issued or not, these games were discontinued, but there were still combats of wild beasts.

and, almost without drawing a sword, he stood at the gates of Rome. Such a sight Rome had not seen since the days of Camillus. The siege was formed. Famine and pestilence slew their thousands; but the senate, trusting that Alaric would accept a moderate ransom, boasted of the vast multitude who were within to defend the walls. "The thicker the hay," said he, "the easier it is mown." On his demanding an enormous sum, they asked, "What, then, do you leave us?" "Your lives!" he replied. At length, however, a ransom was agreed upon, and hallowed statues, the statue of "Fortitude" among them, were melted to make up the sum.

Though Alaric retired from Rome for the time, peace was not concluded with Honorius, and soon the Goth presented himself anew, and set up a rival Emperor, Attalus, who, however, after a short and miserable reign, was sent back by his master to his proper obscurity. The conqueror who had made and unmade him appeared a third time at the walls of the city, which, though thinned by famine, resolved to hold out in the wild hope of succour from Honorius. It was in vain. By treachery, whether from within or from without, the Salarian gate was opened at the dead of night, and soon there was presented in the ancient city a scene of pillage and bloodshed and violation which some of the fathers compared with the horrors that followed the capture of Jerusalem. Alaric, it is said, was not only a Christian, but naturally humane, but, though he issued commands in accordance with his religion and his disposition, the passions of his soldiers, even of those who shared his faith, were, as is usual in such a case, only partially restrained. Part of the capital was destroyed by fire, and, to deepen the gloom and consternation, a terrible storm, which burst forth soon after, overturned several buildings that the flames had spared. "Before the Christian churches alone," says Milman, "rapacity and lust and cruelty were arrested, and stood abashed. When the conflagration raged, as it did in some parts of the city, amid private houses, palaces, or temples, some of the sacred edifices of the Christians might be enveloped in the flames; but the more important churches—those of St. Peter and St. Paul—were respected by the spreading fires, as well as by the infuriated soldiery. There the obedient sword of the conqueror paused in its work of death, and even

his cupidity was overawed. Of all the temple treasuries, the public or private hoards of precious metals, which the owners were compelled to betray by the most excruciating tortures, the jewels, the plate, the spoils of centuries of conquest, and the accumulated plunder of provinces, only the sacred vessels and ornaments of Christian worship remained inviolate. It was said that sacred vessels found without the precincts of the Church were borne with reverential decency into the sanctuary. Of this Orosius relates a remarkable and particular history. A fierce soldier entered in quest of plunder into the dwelling of an aged Christian virgin. He demanded, in courteous terms, the surrender of her treasures. She exposed to his view many vessels of gold, of great size, weight, and beauty; vessels of which the soldier knew neither the use nor name. 'These,' she said, 'are the property of the Apostle St. Peter. Take them if you dare, and answer for your act to God. A defenceless woman, I cannot protect them from your violence; my soul, therefore, is free from sin.' The soldier stood awe-struck. A message was sent to Alaric, and orders were instantly despatched that the virgin and her holy treasures should be safely conducted to the Church of the Apostle. The procession (for the virgin's dwelling was far distant from the Church) was led through the long and wondering streets. The people broke out into hymns of adoration, and amid the tumult of disorder and ruin, the tranquil pomp pursued its course; the name of Christ rose swelling above the wild dissonance of the captured city." [1]

The number of the slain, of those who were reduced to slavery, of those who became fugitives, it is impossible to estimate. Among the fugitives, it is supposed, were the most eminent heathens, who, scattered and peeled, no longer exercising any influence that could be felt, were gradually swallowed up and lost in the general population of the Empire. I may mention that Gibbon, who by no means speaks lightly of the catastrophe which took place when the gates were opened at midnight, and the inhabitants were awakened by the tremendous sound of the Gothic trumpet, yet at the same time affirms without hesitation, "that the ravages of the Barbarians, whom Alaric had led from the banks of the

[1] *History of Latin Christianity*, Bk. ii. ch. i.

Danube, were less destructive than the hostilities exercised by the troops of Charles the Fifth, a Catholic prince, who styled himself Emperor of the Romans. The Goths evacuated the city at the end of six days, but Rome remained above nine months in the possession of the Imperialists, and every hour was stained by some atrocious act of cruelty, lust, and rapine." [1]

We have to notice, besides the points brought out in the narrative, two things.

1. While the props and stays of the ancient religion were swept away by the destroying flood, not merely many of the temples that had been spared in the previous century, but places of amusement, which had so long been associated with the old faith and had repelled from the new, going down before it, Christianity, though somewhat corrupted and enfeebled, retained much of its original inherent strength. Accustomed for three centuries to live and grow without external help, and in spite of external hostility, it had little to suffer from the terrible blows which struck the Empire. On the contrary, it was she that brought help in the day of calamity. Her ministers did much to preserve order when voids were left in the civil administration. Her charity, which the great sorrow of the time awakened, as in the days of old when pestilence raged in Alexandria and Carthage, nourished the indigent, succoured the oppressed, welcomed the wanderer, opened her sanctuary (in a time when justice was not tempered with mercy) even for the guilty, and, above all, freely parted with her treasures to redeem the captives. She parted with her treasures—her most sacred treasures. Well did Ambrose defend himself when some of his enemies blamed him for having sold the golden cups of the Church to ransom her prisoners: "The holy mysteries need no gold, nor does their celebration please God on account of the gold. Commemorate the shedding of Christ's blood out of any vessel. The ornament of the sacrament is the heart that would save the living vessels rather than the dead." Though neither he nor any divine of that age understood the principle of religious equality, yet the great loving heart of Ambrose gained him a personal influence such as had hardly been

[1] [*Decline and Fall*, ch. xxxi.] The dates of the three sieges are 408, 409, 410 A.D.

known in the Church since the days of the apostles. Deep calleth unto deep. The same spirit dwelling in others—in many others—according to their measure, paganism in its weakness had difficulty in withstanding the weapons which had chiefly prevailed against it when it was strong. The sons of the stranger who were relieved or redeemed would not doubt that what the Church spake to them she spake in love.[1]

2. The barbarian invaders were for the most part Christians, or were favourably disposed toward the Christian faith. It has been remarked by a French author that the Germanic nations, had they established themselves in the Empire of Rome some centuries earlier, would have adopted its gods; their Odin would have been identified with Jupiter, their Thor with Mars, their Freya with Venus. This is on the principle that, with regard to religion, as well as with regard to civilisation, it is not physical force, but intellectual superiority that determines the result—*Græcia capta ferum victorem cepit.* And certainly we cannot for a moment suppose that, if the barbarians had been all pagans, Christianity, after triumphing over the religion of the Empire, would have succumbed to the superstition of the north. But, before the end of the third century, Christian captives, carried away by the Goths, had gained their masters to the gospel, and, as you remember, it is narrated that in the year 325 A.D., a Gothic bishop was one of the three hundred and eighteen who deliberated at Nice. At that time Ulphilas was a child of seven. Chiefly through the influence and labours of his life, above all, by his translation of the Scriptures, the greater part of his nation appears to have embraced his religion, and hence it was, obviously, that in the invasion of Italy, so disastrous to paganism, the northern soldiers respected the Church.

The conversion of the Goths, it may be added, prepared for the conversion of the other tribes, who came originally, like themselves, from the shores of the Danube. The barbarian chief Odoacer, who overturned the western Empire in 476

[1] [The position in which the Church was placed by the results of the barbarian invasion had an important influence on her organisation. See Hatch: *Growth of Early Church Institutions.*]

A.D., took the title of King of Italy, the feeble Romulus Augustulus having abdicated and retired—it is not certainly known where; some say that it was to a country-house built by Lucullus. Odoacer, who overthrew this Empire,—if it could be said that there was an empire during the preceding years, which saw a rapid succession of emperors,—was, like Alaric, a Christian, though, like him also, an Arian. He is said to have governed wisely, and, as respects religion, with a noble impartiality which orthodox sovereigns had seldom shown. Another revolution quickly followed, Odoacer being overcome and succeeded, in 493 A.D., by Theodosius, King of the Ostrogoths; but again the conqueror was a Christian, and the Church did not suffer.

The downfall of paganism, then, may be said to have taken place in the fifth century. Isolated worshippers of the old gods may have been found in Italy afterwards, and more than isolated cases in the Morea, long after the reign of Justinian; but paganism was no longer an appreciable force in the Græco-Roman world. We cannot grudge it the few noble forms that glorified its last days, as that of a Symmachus, and, above all, that of a Hypatia, emerging from the darkness and ruin as if to teach us that, while men cannot be so good as the religion which we call Divine, they may be better than the religion which the ancient Christians called demoniacal. And let us remember that heathenism, which was righteously doomed to destruction, is not, though long associated with it, to be identified with Hellenism. The marvellous originality and productiveness of the Grecian mind, whose inspiring aid has been so potent in all subsequent civilisation; that exaggerated sense of beauty which showed itself in the smallest vessel for daily use, as well as in unapproachable masterpieces of art and eloquence and poetry; the pure thoughts that breathe even from many a page in which false gods are named and honoured: these things can be traced to no malignant, soul-destroying power, but to the Father of Lights, "from whom cometh down every good gift and every perfect gift." We know that the diffusion of Hellenism—not merely the language, but the literature, of Greece—prepared for the early triumphs of the Cross. We know, as Socrates told us when speaking of Julian, that it was in accordance with ancient

custom for Christians to draw at the fountain which the Emperor desired to seal. Devout fathers could sleep peacefully with a classic, even a comedian, under their pillow. And long centuries after, when many idolatrous and superstitious usages, derived in great part from paganism and perpetuating its spirit and essence under new forms and names, prevailed in the Church; and when, not to speak of manifold moral imperfections, the scholastic method, at first a useful discipline, had become, to use the figure that has been sometimes applied to it, a sort of intellectual treadmill, on which men laboured incessantly without advancing a step; then again, among the means which Providence employed to prepare for and accomplish the Reformation, was, not the least, the revival of learning. It was not without its dangers. Some actually returned to the paganism of antiquity, and a greater number broke with religion altogether. But when learned men came from the sinking or fallen Empire of the east, and repaid the hospitality of Italy with the treasures of their erudition, and when popes prided themselves on being the patrons of letters, then, in a better atmosphere than that of Constantinople, was rekindled the old light which once before had been the herald of day, and soon, over the best part of Europe, Protestantism, with its single orb—Christ as He is revealed in His word—chased away popery, with its pale, ineffectual fires of saints and ceremonies. In more than one work, I have seen the sublime word of Paul, "All things are yours," applied to the intellectual spoil which Christianity has taken from Greece and Rome. The immortal gods are gone; but mortal men who, while worshipping them, were sometimes seeking the unknown God if haply they might feel after Him and find Him, still live, and live for us.

CHAPTER XLIII.

AMBROSE.

In giving the history of the downfall of paganism in the fifth century I have repeatedly named the most conspicuous divine of the west in that period. Ambrose was sprung from an illustrious consular family. His father, from whom he took his name, was *præfectus prætorio Galliarum*, and was thus entrusted with the administration of some of the most considerable provinces of the western Empire, including Britain. The prefect resided sometimes at Arles, sometimes at Lyons, but usually at Treves, where, according to the commonly received account, the young Ambrose was born about the year 340 A.D. The date of his birth, however, I have seen set down as 333 A.D.—three years, that is, before Athanasius came to Treves under sentence of banishment.[1] A legend similar to that which glorified the infancy of Plato is told of Ambrose. A swarm of bees descended upon him when he was sleeping in his cradle, alighted on his face, flew in and out at his open mouth. The nurse wished to drive them away, but the father, who was looking on, would not suffer her. At length the swarm suddenly flew away without having done the child the least injury. It is scarcely necessary to interpret the legend, or, rather, to explain its origin. "Pleasant words," says Solomon, "are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones." Whether the father augured the future eminence of the child or not, he did not live to see him attain it, as he died about 350 A.D. The widowed mother went to Rome with her three children, of whom Ambrose was the youngest. It would appear that, though trained for a civil

1 In one of his letters, Ambrose speaks of himself as fifty-three years of age. This letter was written at a stormy period, and its date may be 387 or 393. [Ep. lix. 3.]

career, and by pagan masters, Ambrose breathed a domestic atmosphere of piety, and was preserved from the corruptions and still prevalent idolatry of the capital. His mother and sister not only were devout, but sympathised with that striving after perfection through detachment from the world to which Athanasius had been the first to exhort in the west. Marcellina, his sister, indeed, took a vow of virginity.[1] If there be any meaning in an anecdote which is told of this period, we may suppose that the possibility, at least, of his turning aside to an ecclesiastical career had dawned upon him. When he saw his relatives and a young friend of his sister's kiss the hand of a bishop who had tarried at their house, he playfully solicited from the hand the same honour; "for," said he, "I shall one day be a bishop too." The story has some interest from the circumstance that Ambrose himself related it at a later period, and this he would hardly have done had he not believed that even then there was in him a certain bent towards the sacred office of which he did not become fully conscious till long afterwards.

After completing his studies in Rome, Ambrose became an advocate, and soon, by his character and gifts, he attracted the attention and gained the confidence of men of the highest rank, particularly of Probus, the chief prefect of Italy, who first made him his counsellor, and afterwards made him prefect,[2] or rather procured for him from Valentinian III. the prefecture, of the provinces of Liguria and Æmilia. Probus, when committing to him this office, is said to have addressed to him the remarkable, and, whether prophetic or not, significant words: "Go and act, not as a judge, but as a bishop."[3] What he meant, probably, was to guard him against the harshness by which civil rulers were commonly characterised in that age, setting before him an office which was usually filled in a different spirit, and which the world now considered honourable. As Probus is said to have been himself a somewhat ambiguous character, his language is a

[1] She was consecrated on a Christmas day (*De Virginibus*, iii. 1, 1) by Liberius, who became bishop in 352 A.D.

[2] Or "consular magistrate." There were "116 provinces, ruled by 3 proconsuls, 37 consulars, 5 correctors, 71 presidents." [Gibbon, chap. xvii. See Art. "Ambrose" in *Dictionary of Christian Biography*.]

[3] *Vade, age non ut judex, sed ut episcopus.*—[Paulinus, 8.]

proof all the more striking of the regard in which the Church and its ministers were now held.

In fact, Ambrose, whose seat of government was at Milan, did rule with mildness as well as justice, and nothing in his rule became him better than its end, or rather—for the end did not immediately follow, and he is said to have done strange things towards the end—his election to the episcopal office. Auxentius, that Arian of Cappadocia who, ignorant of the Latin tongue, had been appointed successor to the orthodox bishop Dionysius, who was banished by Constantius in 355 A.D., had established himself firmly in his position, and, when the religion of the Court changed, and Arianism succumbed in the west, had continued to fill his place with prudence, and had been regarded as the head of the remnant of his party. A few years after the arrival of Ambrose, he died. Immediately there arose a violent commotion. The question was who was fit for the vacant see—an adherent of the Nicene creed, or an Arian. It was debated with such vehemence that a tumult threatened to break out. Ambrose appeared, and was endeavouring to calm the excitement, addressing the people in his official character simply in the interests of order, and, though he may have had his own convictions, taking no notice of the doctrinal difference which had caused so much heat. While he was speaking (it was in the principal church of the city), the voice of a child was heard crying "Ambrosius Episcopus!" The assembled multitude, it is related, took up the cry, and with one mouth declared it ordained of God. Arians and Catholics together shouted out "Ambrosius!"

Ambrose was alarmed at the loud, persistent, unanimous call. He could not comply. He had not yet filled the lower offices of the Church. He had not even been baptized; he was only a catechumen. Such objections he offered, but the people would not listen. He left the church, still resolved to resist their appeal. According to his biographer, Paulinus, who, however, adorned both the cradle and the grave of his hero with legendary marvels, and whose testimony here would need confirmation, which happily it wants, Ambrose now had recourse to the strangest means in order to escape the office. Great and genuine examples of the *nolo episcopari* we have in

that period, as in Chrysostom, Basil, and Hilary; but, if the narrative of Paulinus be true, the case of Ambrose is the most extraordinary. That he might appear unmerciful, he caused some accused persons to be publicly put to torture, quite contrary to his custom. "Thy sins be on us!" cried the people. Next he pretended that he desired to become a philosopher, to devote himself, that is, to an ascetic life. Then, being hindered, he endeavoured to show how unworthy he was of the sacred office by causing dissolute women to be openly brought into his palace. "Thy sins be upon us!" was again the exclamation of the people. He resolved to flee, but lost his way, and, after long wandering, found himself next morning at the gate of Milan. There he was watched, and the Emperor, being appealed to, expressed himself highly gratified at the election. As a last attempt to escape his destiny, he sought refuge in the country house of Leontius, a friend, but, at length, as the friend would not keep him, contrary to the imperial will, he was constrained to accept the office, was baptized, and, eight days afterwards, was consecrated (371 A.D.). That Ambrose was one of the most humble men, that believed the episcopal office to be the most exalted on earth and believed themselves to be unworthy of it, is probable enough; but those drastic, immoral, and in part ridiculous, means are very probably the invention of a morbid fancy, to which nothing seemed extravagant and nothing sinful if it only indicated an awful sense of responsibility in the man elected to so sacred a trust.

Once bishop, Ambrose was wholly bishop. Belonging to a class by which the Church has often suffered—those, namely, who owe their ecclesiastical elevation to their previous influential position in the world—he was the blossom of his Church, giving his property, his name, his gifts, his experience, his whole life, to his office and his Master. Rich in gold and silver and land, he bestowed all on the Church on behalf of the poor, whom he was wont to call his "stewards and treasurers," reserving only as much as would yield a fair income to his sister, Marcellina, while he left it to his brother, Satyrus, to manage the secular affairs of the family.

In those days it was a rare thing in Italy, though it was not in the Greek and the North African Church, for the

bishops to preach. Ambrose, though a novice when he came to his see, and wholly destitute of theological culture, soon introduced the practice of preaching every Sunday, and frequently twice on the one day. That he might qualify himself for his work, he studied, along with the Scriptures, the Greek masters—Clement, Origen, and particularly Basil—and, at the same time, it is said, he took instructions from a presbyter, Simplicianus, who became his successor. Already a practised and eloquent speaker, he had now found the sphere which gave greatest scope for his peculiar gifts. "When I went to hear how well he spake," said Augustine, "unexpectedly my heart opened to feel how truly he spake."[1] He was so overpowering when he preached at the consecration of the virgins who took the veil—and virgins came from Africa to be consecrated by him—that mothers in Milan who desired their daughters to lead the ordinary life of the world carefully kept them at home on such occasions.

Great part of his night was given to study and prayer. By day he was accessible to all that sought from him counsel or consolation or assistance. Augustine, who visited him frequently, found him so occupied that he sometimes was content to look at him for a little in silence, and then withdraw without having been observed.[2]

About the time of the accession of Theodosius (379 A.D.),[3] and shortly after the gold and silver vessels of the Church had been sold to redeem the prisoners taken by the Goths in Thrace and Illyricum, the Bishop had a bitter private grief. His brother, Satyrus, after his return from a voyage on which he was shipwrecked and narrowly escaped with his life, was seized with a mortal illness, and expired in his arms. Ambrose and his sister thought that the last and greatest honour they could confer on the deceased was to make the poor his heirs.[4]

Ambrose was a zealous adherent of the Nicene Creed, and by action, as well as writing and speech, he contended against the Arians, who, doubtless, when they joined in the cry raised

[1] [*Confessions*, v. 14.] [2] [*Ibid.* vi. 3.]

[3] When Gratian chose him as his colleague, after the defeat of Valens (378).

[4] In the depth of his grief he preached *De Excessu Satyri*, and, seven days later, *De Fide Resurrectionis*.

by the child, had expected indulgence or moderation from one who had proved himself so mild and equitable a ruler. But, even at his baptism, he took care that no Arian bishop should be allowed to be present, and soon he gave further proof of his orthodoxy by preventing the election, or effecting the removal, of heretical teachers.[1]

But most memorable of all was the struggle which he had with the empress-mother, Justina, and which began in the year 385 A.D., two years after the death of Gratian, and when Valentinian II. was still but fourteen years of age. Justina, to whom Ambrose had rendered important service, having gone on an embassy to Treves, and by his eloquence and his personal and official weight, prevented the usurper Maximus from advancing against Valentinian, demanded that the Bishop should cede to the Arians a church lying without the city, called Portiana. The order was renewed again and again, but Ambrose, supported by the people, whom he had difficulty in restraining, but whom he was accused of exciting, persisted in his refusal. "The palaces," said he, "belong to the Emperor, the churches to God, and for Him it is the sacred duty of the priest to keep them." This was but the prelude to a more violent conflict in 386 A.D. A law was passed, threatening with death any one who would attempt to prevent the Arians from taking possession of the church. Ambrose convoked all the clergy who were present in Milan, and in their name drew up a petition for the repeal of the law. Justina desired to have the question debated in the palace between him and an Arian bishop. The reply was that it did not belong to the court, but to a synod, to decide on religious questions. He was commanded to leave the city. The reply was that he could not forsake his flock in such a time of peril. An attempt was made to seize his person, but he found refuge in the principal church of the city. It was surrounded with soldiers, who had orders to let in every one who chose to enter, but to let none out. Several days and nights the great assembly continued to gather, clinging to the Bishop, who declared that, if Naboth could not give up the inheritance of his fathers, far less could he give up the inheritance of Christ. These, he said, were the days of the holy captivity; and he

[1] Such as the bishops Palladius and Secundianus in Illyricum.

felt that something more than eloquent speech was needed during the long hours. If great thoughts come from the heart, they come from it, above all, when it is stirred to its depths by great events. Ambrose literally put new songs in the mouths of the captives,—songs of his own composing in praise of the Trinity,—and, at the same time, he introduced in the west the antiphonal singing which had long been practised in the east. A young teacher of rhetoric, who had come to the city in 384 A.D.—it was the man who so often beheld Ambrose with silent wonder—was present with his mother, Monica, and he tells how many tears she had shed in these days of anxiety and ardour, and how he himself, though his heart was not yet touched from above, was enraptured when he heard the vast multitude and clergy praise the Lord in alternate strains. The very soldiers who watched without were seized with enthusiasm, and joined their voices with those of the worshippers within.

Justina was obliged to yield, the people being almost entirely on the side of the Bishop. It is to be noticed that more questions than one were involved in this conflict. The Arians had, throughout these years, preached the omnipotence of the civil power. Ambrose, on the contrary, took his stand upon the principle that the Emperor is in the Church, not above it—a principle from which he never departed, whether he had to do with an orthodox or with a heretical ruler—a principle, too, which even some who do not believe it holds universally, admit to have been most salutary in that age. It is but justice to Ambrose to say that, on the other hand, he never forgot that, though a bishop, he was in civil matters a subject. Of the apostolic faithfulness which fears not man he gave more than one example. When he was at Treves on his first embassy to Maximus, and the usurper was desirous of strengthening himself by gaining the favour of the Church, he declared that he would not receive him into communion till he had done penance for the murder of Gratian; and again, believing that the blood even of a false prophet leaves a deep stain, he declared that he would not hold fellowship with the bishops at whose instigation Maximus had executed the Priscillianists. His vast influence over Theodosius the Great might sometimes be used for the Church in a question-

able way, but in the year 390 A.D. we see him confront this sovereign, who was not only the greatest potentate on earth, but the champion of orthodoxy, as the fearless spokesman of outraged humanity, and the vindicator of its everlasting rights. Bothurius, the governor of Thessalonica, had imprisoned a favourite charioteer on a grave charge, and had refused to liberate him when the people demanded him for the next chariot race. A tumult arose, in which Bothurius himself and certain other persons of distinction were killed, and their bodies dragged through the streets. Theodosius, when heated, was terrible in his vengeance, but usually he was as placable as he was irascible. On this occasion Ambrose and other bishops besought him not to be precipitate, but, though he gave them assurances which satisfied them that the innocent would not be destroyed with the guilty, evil influences were at work, and, before Ambrose was aware, deadly orders were secretly despatched to Thessalonica. Soon the news arrived at Milan that a great chariot race had been arranged, and that seven thousand persons—men and women, strangers and citizens—when assembled in the circus, had been mown down with the sword. Though a cry of horror went through the Empire, few would have ventured to hint to Theodosius that he had been cruel, but one determined quietly and firmly to let him know that he had committed a crime which the Church could not tolerate, and which the Almighty God would never forgive unless the Emperor humbled himself in the dust. Ambrose first communicated with him by letter, setting his sin before him with the courage of a Nathan, and beseeching him to do what David had not been ashamed to do—confess and repent. The account of what followed has, from ancient times, been embellished and dramatised. The Bishop is represented as meeting the Emperor at the gate of the Church, and preventing his entrance. It is certain that Theodosius was excluded from communion for eight months, and was not readmitted till he laid aside the splendours of royalty and publicly did penance, weeping and sighing over the great sin to which, said Ambrose in the Emperor's funeral sermon, "others had seduced him." It is recorded of Theodosius that, shortly before he died, he said he had known only one man worthy to be a bishop.

Within two years after the death of the Emperor, died, on Good Friday, 397 A.D., the man who had told him the truth. Before he died, the illustrious Stilicho, believing that no greater blow could strike Italy, sent messengers, beseeching him to pray for the prolongation of his own life. He would not be ashamed, Ambrose replied, to live longer, but he feared not death, and left himself in the hands of his God. A queen of the Marcomani, who had travelled from the woods of Bohemia to see him, arrived too late.

History shows no better representative of the Church in its love and in its earnestness. What is greatest in the greatest of his century is their character, and this minister of mercy was an old Roman in dignity, and an old Hebrew prophet in zeal. It was no ordinary man who, while loved by the poor he relieved, the prisoners he ransomed, the condemned for whom he interceded, was revered by Theodosius, Stilicho, and Augustine. He was unselfish, devoted, immovable. He defends the Nicene faith against Arianism, Christianity against paganism, the Church against the encroachment of the imperial power, the imperial power against usurpers and assassins, the claims of humanity against any man, friend or foe, that, though it should be in the name of justice and in the name of God, offered them outrage. If Athanasius is like the pyramid, Ambrose is the personification of such a sense of sympathy and beauty as seizes and satisfies the traveller when he gazes on the cathedral of the city in which he lived and died.[1]

[1] Among the works of Ambrose are *De Officiis Ministrorum* (he is sometimes called "the Christian Cicero"); *De Fide*, which is rather a polemic against Arianism than a discussion of dogmatic truths; Funeral Orations on Valentinian II. and Theodosius.

His letters are valuable for the history of the time.

The *Te Deum* has been ascribed to him, but its date is (perhaps) a century later.

CHAPTER XLIV.

DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

THE Nicene Creed, while asserting the eternity and consubstantiality of the Son, contained nothing concerning the Spirit but the words, "and in the Holy Spirit" (*καὶ εἰς τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα*). But, though it might be said that the deity and personality of the Spirit were involved in the definition of the symbol, there existed, in point of fact, a difference of view even among its adherents, some regarding Him as a quality or energy, others speaking of Him as a creature, while the third party, which was the most powerful, believed that they were but expressing what had been the Church's consciousness from the beginning when they called Him God. Now, it was part of the Arian Creed that the Holy Spirit was a created being, the first creature of the Son (Himself a creature), and so subordinate to the Son, as the Son was subordinate to the Father. The Arian Trinity thus consisted, as it has been put, of one uncreated God, and two created demi-gods. The circumstance that many who had no sympathy with the party condemned in their leading doctrine and radical heresy at Nice shared their view regarding the Spirit, or considered Him to be only an influence—a Divine energy diffused throughout the Church, or throughout the world—led to a confusion of names, which is sometimes perplexing. Usually, indeed, the names Pneumatomachi, Macedonians, and also Tropici (those who explained the passages on which the deity of the Spirit was grounded as figures of speech), are employed to denote those who, while they were not Arians, denied the personality, or asserted the creation of the Holy Ghost. To speak properly, the Pneumatomachi, or Pneumatomachists, were those who, whether originally Arians or not, had embraced the established doctrine concerning the Second Person, but were in error concerning

the Third. The Macedonians, again, were the followers of Macedonius, Bishop of Constantinople, who had been an Anomœan when appointed to his see, but afterwards, becoming a Homoousian, was deposed by the Arian Council of Constantinople in 360 A.D. Such, it appears was the original difference. The Pneumatomachists were Homoousians, the Macedonians, Homoiousians; but, as they held a common heresy concerning the Spirit, the names not unnaturally came to be used interchangeably. Moreover, the word Semi-Arianism was frequently used of false doctrine concerning the Third Person, which was certainly a departure from its proper and original sense.

The Pneumatomachists (to take that name) argued from John i. 3: "All things were made by Him" (the Logos). Consequently, they continued, the Spirit was created by Him, or had its origin from Him. But they argued, further, that the doctrine of the Divinity, and, it need not be added, the personality, of the Spirit was irrational as well as unscriptural. If we suppose Him to be Divine, He must be either unbegotten, like the Father, or begotten, like the Son. If He is unbegotten, then we have two beings absolutely without beginning; if He is begotten, and by the Father, then we have two Sons; and if He be begotten, not by the First, but by the Second Person, then we have a Son's Son. It was, of course, a great assumption that, unbegotten, the Third Person could not sustain an immanent relation to the First and the Second Person, which might be expressed without the idea of generation, or which might possibly be altogether ineffable. Athanasius, in combating the Pneumatomachists, certainly did not confine himself to Scripture arguments, but with the orthodox generally the main appeal was to the formula of baptism and the apostle's benediction. Subsidiary proof was found in the traditional doxologies, and in the very word Trinity, which had been in use from the time of Tertullian, and with which the denial of personality and common essence seemed to be incompatible. It is remarkable that some of the eminent fathers, who contended for the consubstantiality of the Spirit, admit that there was great diversity of opinion among men otherwise orthodox. Thus, in a passage often quoted, Gregory of Nazianzus says: "Of the wise

among us, some regard the Holy Ghost as an influence, others a creature, others God Himself, and again others know not how to decide, from reverence, as they say, for Holy Scripture, which teaches nothing definite on the question."[1] Gregory himself, to vindicate the doctrine, had recourse to the idea of gradual revelation. The Old Testament revealed the Father clearly, but the Son darkly. The New Testament revealed the Son clearly, but the Spirit darkly. Now the Spirit dwells among us, and manifests Himself fully, so that the heart attests His personal existence, and confirms the comparatively obscure intimations of the Word. Hilary,[2] in addition to the common Scripture proofs, laid great stress on a passage that has often since been appealed to on both sides. This is 1 Cor. ii. 10: "God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so, the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God."

The passages I have referred to seemed to prove at once the personality and the Divinity of the Spirit. Of course there were many passages quoted besides, which clearly established the Divinity, as, for instance, those which ascribe to Him a part in creation, in the inspiration of Moses and the prophets, in the regeneration, sanctification, consolation, and guidance of believers; those which speak of lying to Him as lying to God, and of blaspheming against Him as the unpardonable sin; but the question was whether the term Spirit, though not meaning a distinct Person, might not with propriety be used to denote God energising in a particular manner, or even working by a created agent. What I mean is that, though such proofs might be realised, their force could be weakened by an objection to which the baptismal formula and the apostolic benediction were by no means equally open. To make the point clear, we may say that it surely would not be difficult to explain away many of those passages by the doctrine which some, at least, of the Pneumatomachists held, that the impersonal Spirit was the vinculum of the Persons in the Godhead, and, at the same time, was the Divine energy diffused through the universe.

[1] [*De Spiritu Sancto.*]

[2] [*De Trinitate*, ii. 27.]

The heresy of the Pneumatomachists was condemned, under the influence of Athanasius, in a synod at Alexandria (362), in a synod in Illyricum (367), at a synod at Rome (in the same year), and, above all, in the Second Ecumenical Council, that of Constantinople, convened by Theodosius the Great in 381 A.D., when, in opposition indeed to several heresies, but in opposition to this heresy in particular, the Nicene faith was reaffirmed and completed. Additions, however, the same in effect as those made to the creed at this council, had been previously made to it, and, though without the authority of the collective Church, had been widely used. Thus, in a work written by Epiphanius in the year in which Ambrose was made bishop (374 A.D.), the creed is found with the following addition to the words, "in the Holy Spirit":—

τὸ λαλῆσαν ἐν νόμῳ, καὶ κηρύξαν ἐν τοῖς προφήταις, καὶ καταβὰν ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰορδάνην, λαλοῦν ἐν ἀποστόλοις, αἰνοῦν ἐν ἁγίοις· οὕτως δὲ πιστεύομεν, ἐν αὐτῷ, ὅτι ἐστὶ πνεῦμα ἅγιον, πνεῦμα θεοῦ, πνεῦμα τέλειον, πνεῦμα παράκλητον, ἄκτιστον, ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκπορευόμενον, καὶ ἐκ τοῦ υἱοῦ λαμβανόμενον καὶ πιστευόμενον.[1]

The addition in the Niceno-Constantinople Creed stand thus after "the Holy Spirit":—

"Who is Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and Son is worshipped and glorified, who spake by the prophets."[2]

[1] ["Who spoke in the law, and heralded in the prophets, and who descended at the Jordan, who speaks in the apostles, who gives praise in the saints. Thus we believe in Him, that He is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, perfect Spirit, the Spirit the Paraclete, uncreated, proceeding from the Father, and received and believed in from the Son."]

[2] τὸ κύριον, τὸ ζωοποιὸν, τὸ ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκπορευόμενον, τὸ σὺν πατρὶ καὶ υἱῷ προσκυνούμενον καὶ συνδοξαζόμενον, τὸ λαλῆσαν διὰ τῶν προφητῶν.

For forty years the see of Constantinople had been in Arian hands. Gregory of Nazianzus was appointed administrator of the bishopric in 379 A.D. (the year after that of Valens' death). He used the house of a friend as a chapel, which he called Anastasia, and from the poor chapel sprang the famous church of the same name. Once the Arians broke into the place of worship at midnight, during divine service, and the holy wine was mingled with blood. About the time Gregory came to Constantinople, Theodosius was appointed administrator of the east. When he arrived in the city late in 380 A.D., all churches were given back to the orthodox, and the Arian bishop Demophilus was forced to leave it. A meeting of Oriental bishops was convened, at which Damasus was present neither in person nor by representatives. Of the thirty-six Macedonians, the most famous were Eleusius of Cyzicus and Marcianus of Lampsacus.

The question early arose whether the Spirit proceeded only from the Father, or from the Father and the Son. Some Greek fathers of that period—Epiphanius, Marcellus of Ancyra, and Cyril of Alexandria—have been quoted as holding the doctrine afterwards universally adopted in the west. Marcellus, however, did not hold the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity at all, and Cyril, though he condemned those who did not derive the Holy Ghost from Christ, did not use language sufficiently precise to warrant the conclusion that he held the double procession. Even the passages quoted from Epiphanius, though more to the purpose, are not perfectly satisfactory. He says, "The Holy Spirit, of the same essence as the Father and the Son," but without the "proceed";[1] and one or two other phrases are adduced. It is difficult, however, to disprove what has been said by some of the fathers of the Eastern Church

There were one hundred and fifty orthodox present. Meletius of Antioch, then Gregory of Nazianzus, and, after his resignation, Nectarius, presided. Timotheus of Alexandria had not been present at the beginning.

Gregory, who had been administrator only, was made Bishop of Constantinople by the council. He had been formerly Bishop of Sasima, and was translated for the "greater good of the Church." Meletius died shortly after the opening of synod. Nectarius, who succeeded Gregory as president, was a senator, and had not been baptized.

The Macedonians early left the council, which appears to have sat from May to July, part of both months included.

The third canon of the council is: τὸν μέντοι Κωνσταντινουπόλιως ἐπίσκοπον ἔχειν τὰ πρεσβεῖα τῆς τιμῆς μετὰ τὸν τῆς Ῥώμης ἐπίσκοπον, διὰ τὸ αὐτὴν εἶναι νέαν Ῥώμην. ["That the Bishop of Constantinople have the prerogative of honour after the Bishop of Rome, forasmuch as it is the new Rome."]

The Thracian diocese was no longer under the Bishop of Heraclea. According to some, honour only was conferred by the Constantinoplitan Council, jurisdiction by that of Chalcedon.

Only four of the canons are genuine. The decisions of the council were confirmed by Theodosius at Heraclea on July 31st. The proceedings were in part disapproved by a Latin council in the same year (381 A.D.); particularly the prolongation of the Meletian schism by the appointment of Flavian (contrary to the mind of Gregory) [to the See of Antioch, as successor of Meletius], and the declaration that Maximus, who had been consecrated by Peter of Alexandria, had not been, and was not, Bishop of Constantinople; but the symbol was received by Gregory the Great. Other Bishops of Rome had recognised the ecumenical authority of the council before him—Vigilius and Pelagius II. The Council of Chalcedon had the symbol of Constantinople read with that of Nice.

[1] ἐκ τῆς αὐτῆς οὐσίας πατρὸς καὶ υἱοῦ, πνεῦμα ἅγιον, without the ἐκπορεύεσθαι [*Ancoratus*, Sec. vii.].

generally: that, as Blunt expresses it, while they keep close to the words of Scripture, which only declares a "procession" (ἐκπόρευσις) from the Father, yet they really imply, without directly stating it, the doctrine of the double procession.

As to the western fathers, their testimony—and of course there are many who lay great stress on such testimony independently of Scripture or of reason—is much more frequent, explicit, and decided. Indeed, appeal has been made to a writer of a much earlier period—Tertullian, who (in 200 A.D.) said that the Holy Spirit was derived from no other source than, as it is sometimes quoted, "from the Father and the Son,"—rather, "from the Father by the Son": *Quia Spiritum non aliunde puto quam a Patre per Filium.*[1] This, I may remark, would not satisfy a divine of the present day, Dr. Yeomans, who is quoted with approval by Schaff. This divine, who considers the doctrine of the double procession as formulated in the west to have been of vital importance in the development of a sound theological system, says: "The procession only *de Patre per Filium* would put the *Church* at arm's length, so to speak, from God; that is, beyond Christ, off at an extreme, or at one side, of the kingdom of divine life, rather than in the centre and bosom of that kingdom, where all things are hers."[2] It is remarkable to find eminent men who protest not less loudly than Dr. Yeomans that this is no mere logomachy, but that they are maintaining a fundamental truth, contending keenly that procession by the Son really amounts to the same thing as procession from the Son. The whole discussion, you may now say, was a logomachy; but you would have said that to little purpose when it was living and raging. In truth, I may say I never met a man who admitted that he was a logomachist—that is, of course, when the question was ostensibly one of principle or doctrine. The confession that this or that word, or that several words, had been misunderstood is a different thing.

The other passage from Tertullian is better: "The Spirit is the Third from God and His son, as the fruit which comes

[1] [*Adv. Prax.* c. 4.]
[2] [*History of the Christian Church*, vol. iii. p. 689, note.]

from the shrub is the third from the root; and the river which proceeds from the stream is the third from the fountain." As to meaning, that is really as before—*per Filium: Tertius est Spiritus a Deo et Filio.*

But, if there be any doubt as to the propriety of quoting Tertullian as an authority, there can be none as to the fact that, from the end of the fourth century—and the dogmatic question can hardly be said to have been agitated previously—the western fathers, with, I suppose, hardly an exception, took the view which was afterwards expressed in the famous addition to the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed. They, however, in treating the subject, originally took the economy of salvation as their point of view, according to which the Spirit is sent by the Son, as we read in several familiar verses of John, and in Luke xxiv. 49: "Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." What, on the other hand, the Greek fathers were solicitous about was to avoid language which might seem to imply that the Third Person derived His existence from the Second. Now, the object of the creed was to meet the Pneumatomachists by affirming that the Spirit stood in a personal relation to the Father as close and immediate as that of the Son, though expressed by another term than "generation." This by no means excluded the *filioque* ["and from the Son"], either as the ἐκπόρευσις ["procession"] seems to have been originally understood in the west, from the point of view of the economy of salvation, or as it soon came to be understood there, as well as in the east, of an immanent and eternal relation. When the addition (*filioque*) was made by the council of Toledo (589 A.D.), it would not, on the one hand—to look at it as a merely doctrinal question—be argued that there were any Greek authorities who had explicitly rejected the view it expressed; and, on the other hand, it was supported by the *consensus patrum* in the west, and particularly by the weighty name of Augustine. The protracted and vehement dispute between east and west which the *filioque* occasioned did not break out till after the middle of the ninth century (876—Photius). When it did break out, there was no difference of opinion among the Latins as to the doctrine, though many of

them, as well as of the Greeks, held—and many hold still—that the addition to the Nicene Creed was unwarrantable.

Blunt, who contends for the Catholic doctrine, adopts the views, and, to some extent, the language of mediæval theologians.[1] Though he adheres firmly to the *filioque*, it would be equally appropriate, as his explanation of that addition goes, were he to use the words *per filium* ["through the Son"]. "The Father is the only fountain of Godhead, and the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father through the Son as from one source, and, in theological phrase, by one spiration." At the same time he says—and we cannot wonder at his saying it—"We are compelled to use such terms as 'spiration' and 'procession' in reference to the Third Person of the Trinity, and rival disputants argue from them as if they conveyed a definite meaning or were fully intelligible to ourselves, which assuredly is not true; hence follows, on both sides, much irreverent language, and inferences and conclusions upon which no real dependence can be placed." But no one, as far as I have seen, has better exhibited the Scripture proof of the doctrine which the phrase "double procession" is an imperfect attempt to express. He admits that the passage which has given the word "procession"[2] does not necessarily denote an eternal relationship; but, indeed, it was felt even by Augustine that more was needed, and more was given. I can only indicate the Scripture argument as put by Blunt. He compares the passages which speak of the Spirit of God with those which speak of the Spirit of Christ. The Spirit of God,[3] he contends, is always represented as inherently possessing, through that relationship, all the prerogatives and attributes of Godhead, as omnipresence, omniscience, and eternal existence (Ps. cxxxix. 2; 1 Cor. ii. 10; Heb. ix. 14). When we admit this, there is the same proof that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Son as from the Father. The passage here of which he particularly speaks, is 1 Pet. i. 11, where the Spirit of Christ is said to have inspired the prophets, from which it is argued that He is called

[1] [*Dictionary of Doctrinal and Historical Theology*: Art. "Procession of the Holy Ghost."]

[2] John xv. 26: "The Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father."

[3] Blunt, of course, assumes the personality of the Spirit.

the Spirit of Christ not merely as being sent by Christ to complete His mediatorial work (the usual explanation given by those who deny the doctrine of the double procession), but because of an eternal relationship.

It is enough, I think, thus to indicate the line of proof taken in support of a doctrine in which, so formulated, some take a living and deep interest, but of which the importance is generally considered to be chiefly historical.

It may be necessary to offer at this point a word of explanation as to terms. *οὐσία* and *ὑπόστασις* were, at the date of the Nicene Council, used as synonymous [= "essence"]. Gradually, however, the latter word came to be used for "person." *οὐσία*, says Basil, is *τὸ κοινόν* ["what is common"], *ὑπόστασις, τὸ καθ' ἕκαστον* ["what pertains to each"].[1] *Πρόσωπον* lost favour for a while, but came again into general use after it had lost the taint of Sabellianism. Each of the three Hypostases, or Persons, has his *ἴδιον*, or *proprium*. The *ἴδιον*, or *proprium*, of the Father is that He is unbegotten; that of the Son, that He is begotten; that of the Spirit, that He proceedeth.

When the significance of those terms was fluctuating, Athanasius, as I formerly remarked, was very careful not to make a man an offender for a word. This he showed through a considerable period of his life, and particularly at the last synod at which he appeared (Alexandria; 362 A.D.), when the terms *οὐσία* and *ὑπόστασις* were in question.

We may, of course, learn from men with whom we are at variance on important questions, and I now quote a prophetic word from Dean Stanley: "In Goethe's *Faust*, the counsel given by Mephistopheles is to pay no attention to *things* in theology, but to dwell solely on *words*. This is the devil's advice to theological students; and alas! by too many, in every age of the world, most faithfully has it been followed. The advice and the example of Athanasius are exactly the contrary. Words no doubt are of high importance in Theology. Both in ecclesiastical history and in the interpretation of Scripture, the study of their origin and meaning is most fruitful. Athanasius himself introduced into our confessions one of the most famous of them. But this gives the greater

[1] *ἰδιότης* and *φύσις* were sometimes given as equivalents.

force to his warning when he bids the contending parties ascertain first of all what is the meaning of the terms they use, and then, if the meaning on both sides is the same, to fix their attention not on the *words* respecting which they differ, but on the *things* respecting which they are agreed."[1]

[1] *Eastern Church*, p. 253.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE ORIGENISTIC CONTROVERSY—THE CONTROVERSY IN PALESTINE.

In connection with the Arian and the Macedonian or Pneumatomachist controversies stands the Origenistic controversy. It was, in truth, of older date than either of these, Methodius of Tyre having attacked some of Origen's doctrines at the beginning of the century, and having been answered by Pamphilus in an apology which was afterwards completed by Eusebius of Cæsarea. Both these writers suffered martyrdom shortly before the edicts of toleration were issued by Constantine.[1] The dispute, being so far of a personal nature, had been driven into the background by the great controversy of the age, but it was mainly because it was related to that controversy that, after its termination, it was quickly resumed, and with greater heat than ever. There were some who, not content with the victory achieved over Arianism, were resolved to pursue it to its source, and not to rest till they had obtained a sentence of condemnation against the "father of Arianism," as they called the man who had been dead for a century and a half—a man whose writings, though it was acknowledged there were errors in them, had won the admiration of Athanasius, Basil, and the two Gregories.

For the first phase of the Origenistic controversy when it broke out afresh at the end of the fourth century we have to look to Palestine, where lived, at this time, three zealous promoters of theological learning who held Origen in great veneration—John, bishop of Jerusalem, Rufinus, presbyter of Aquileia, and Jerome (Hieronymus), whose attention had been first directed to the "Adamantine" by Gregory Nazianzen, and who had not only translated portions of his writings, but, in the preface to the translations, had warmly eulogised the theologian of Alexandria, though he had by no means adopted

[1] [But see Art. "Methodius" in *Dictionary of Christian Biography*.]

all his doctrines. The report spread that the most dangerous heresies of the great teacher were gaining ground in the church of Palestine, and Jerome, who was more solicitous about his own reputation for orthodoxy than about the fame of Origen or the interests of theological science, immediately took alarm and protested that he had acted in accordance with the apostolic injunction, "prove all things, hold fast that which is good," emphasising the latter half.

But soon the great heresiologist of the age, who had branded Origen with the name "father of Arianism," appeared on the spot to destroy the deadly influence of a writer so fundamentally unsound. This was Epiphanius, who had been fired, long before this period, with a zeal for orthodoxy which would never have been surpassed had he not continued to live. He did live, and to a venerable old age. He had been born of Jewish parents about 310 A.D., or somewhat later, at a village near Eleutheropolis, in Palestine, had been converted, about 330 A.D., by a Christian monk, Hilarion, had led a monastic life, partly in Egypt, and partly in his own country, whence, when head of a cloister which he had built himself in the neighbourhood of his birthplace, he removed to Cyprus, having been called by the bishops of that island to the See of Constantia, the capital[1] (367). Here he continued to lead a rigidly ascetic life, sometimes to the injury of his health, and, acquiring a great reputation for learning and beneficence, as well as for piety, exerted an influence far beyond the island of which he was metropolitan, and even beyond the adjacent countries on the shores of the Mediterranean. His fame as an author rests chiefly on his *Πανάριον*, a great work against heresies, a term which he used in no narrow sense, applying it to everything that had been taught contrary to Scripture and the tradition of the Church, the founders of the different schools in ancient Greece being put in the same category as Paul of Samosata, Origen, and Arius, and all being compared with serpents and vipers. His book was a chest of antidotes to their poisonous doctrines.[2]

[1] Formerly Salamis.

[2] In 374 A.D. he addressed to the monks of the east his *Ἀγκυρωτὸς λόγος*, a treatise composed for the refutation of heretical objections.

The *Πανάρι.ν* (376) mentions eighty heresies, twenty of which are anterior to

Even Schaff, whose orthodoxy is as unquestionable as is his eminence in learning and ability, describes Epiphanius as an honest, well-meaning, and, by his contemporaries, highly respected man, but a violent, coarse, contracted, and bigoted monastic saint and heresy-hunter.

Imagine, then, the great heresiologist, upwards of fourscore years, but still vigorous, notwithstanding his asceticism and his temper, appear on the very spot where the reputed heretics lived, and where his renown as a man who had dealt with all heresies from the beginning of the world had long preceded him. Less notable persons had already expostulated with the suspected divines, but the matter became most serious when now, in Jerusalem, Origen was decreed fatally unsound by a voice which almost the whole Christian world regarded as authoritative. Jerome is sometimes pictured as surveying, from his solitary watch-tower at Bethlehem, the whole Church, deeply interested, and sometimes taking part keenly, in the movements of the time. He had himself been watched, and, being desirous of placing his soundness in the faith above suspicion, he did not long hesitate as to his course after the arrival of the mighty zealot of Cyprus. Epiphanius, received with great veneration by the people of Jerusalem, required Bishop John to pronounce the condemnation of Origen. The bishop refused, but, at the same time, acknowledged that he found some things that were false, as well as much that was true, in the writings of the great teacher. Then Epiphanius ascended the pulpit in Jerusalem, and with great vehemence denounced Origen and all who approved his writings. The Bishop, on the other hand, preached against anthropomorphism, but Epiphanius, joining in the denunciation of anthropomorphism, still insisted on the condemnation of Origen. Obtaining no satisfaction either from John or from Rufinus, who was also in the Holy City, he betook himself to Bethlehem, and forthwith gained the alliance of Jerome, who formerly had regarded Origen as the greatest Christian writer from the days of the apostles. The monks

the Christian era. Of the sixty, the two against which he is most violent are those of Origen and Arius.

Epiphanius wrote also a treatise on the weights and measures mentioned in the Bible, and on the twelve precious stones on Aaron's garment; also a Commentary on the Song of Solomon.

of Bethlehem, with Jerome at their head, actually renounced communion with the Church of Jerusalem, simply because its Bishop had refused to purge away suspicion by applying the standards of the fourth century to a man who had laboured and suffered for Christianity in the third. It is a gloomy shadow cast over the Church at the spot where its Founder was born, and the angels sang of peace. "'Glory to God,' they sang first," Jerome would have replied; but here precisely is the prodigious error into which men, both great and small, have fallen—that they have thought it glorifying to God to anathematise both the quick and the dead who, though following Christ, followed not, or have not in all directions followed, with them. On the other hand, one of the plainest lessons in history is that we are not to suppose that this narrowness is necessarily associated with intellectual weakness or with spiritual pride. Not only is Jerome reckoned among the great doctors of the west—he was a man of higher qualities than Epiphanius, the "five-tongued" (πενταγλωσσος), by whom his genius was rebuked—not only was he a man of great gifts and learning, but he was a man truly devout, daily holding converse with the Holy Child in a way which he has himself beautifully described, and which we have every reason to believe he deeply felt. "O Child, how hard the couch on which Thou liest for me! How shall I requite Thee?" "Give glory to God; for thee I will suffer more in the garden and on the cross." "But I must requite Thee; something I must give Thee." "Give it to the poor; it is done to Me." "But I must give Thee something." "O Hieronymus, give me thy sin that I may bear it, and bear it away." And then the oft-renewed converse ends: "Take what is Mine, give what is thine!"

We know little of man if we say that all this was mere hypocrisy. We could not call it by that name, though he had professed such communion on the very day when the Bishop of Constantia frightened him into participation in the narrowest, most unjustifiable—it is a pity we cannot add most impotent—kind of persecution that bigotry has ever resorted to. But bigotry has its various degrees, and I have seen it mentioned in praise of Jerome, and by way of exonerating him so far from the charge of intolerance, that,

shortly after he came to Palestine, he was so successful in overcoming his repugnance to the enemies of Christ as to learn lessons in Hebrew from an unconverted Jew. This was well, and Christendom, through Jerome, got the benefit. But, on the whole, in this case the unconverted Jew ran the greater risk. He was obliged to come to his pupil by night for fear of the Jews, who, had they learned that he was opening up the treasures of the Old Testament to a Christian, would not have forgiven him.

The schism in Palestine, painful in itself, and involving Jerome in a bitter controversy with his two personal friends, was healed in 397 A.D., chiefly through the mediation of Theophilus of Alexandria, who was at this time an admirer and defender of Origen. Unhappily, however, the controversy was not thus laid to rest, and when it broke out afresh, it was more passionate and personal than ever. It seems to be universally agreed that now the disputant chiefly to blame was Rufinus. Having gone to Rome, he translated into Latin several of Origen's writings, particularly the περὶ ἀρχῶν; and, by way of justifying his admiration of his author, and recommending him to the western reader, he adduced, in his preface, the testimony of the eminent Jerome. But he did worse. He took great liberties with the author himself, changing many passages which he thought would, if faithfully rendered, give great offence to the adherents of the Nicene confession. The consequence was a violent correspondence between the two friends. At last Anastasius, of Rome, held a synod which condemned the writings of Origen that were before them. Rufinus had been cited to appear,[1] but he contented himself with sending a confession of his faith, which proved satisfactory. He resorted for a time to Aquileia, which had then a convent (Vinetium), and died in Sicily in 410 A.D.

[1] According to some authorities.

CHAPTER XLVI.

SOME NOTES ON JEROME.

JEROME[1] was born at Stridon, in Dalmatia, about 340. At the age of twenty he came to Rome, where he was taught by the grammarian Donatus. He became an enthusiastic admirer of Terence and Virgil, and was also a student of Plato. After making several journeys in Gaul, he went (372) to Aquileia, where he remained more than a year, enjoying intercourse with Valerian, the Bishop, and Rufinus.

Jerome then went to the east. At Antioch, in the year 374, he had a dream, in which he found himself before the judgment-seat. "Art thou a Christian?" he was asked, and he answered "Yes." "Thou liest," was the reply; "thou art a Ciceronian."[2] Jerome, still in the dream, vowed to read no more heathen authors. At the end of 374, he left Antioch for the wilderness,—the "Syrian Thebais,"—where he led a strictly ascetic life. He returned to the city in 379, and was consecrated a presbyter by Paulinus, the Bishop, the express stipulation being made that he should perform no official functions. He afterwards spent about three years in Constantinople, where, under the guidance of Gregory of Nazianzus, he studied Scripture interpretation and the Greek fathers.

Jerome went to Rome in 382, on account of the Meletian schism, and there he was commissioned by Bishop Damasus to undertake the revision of the old Latin translation of the Scriptures. The improvements made in his work, however, were considered by some to be dangerous innovations. In 385 he set out for the east, leaving Rome for ever. He took part in the Pelagian controversy, as he had taken part in the

[1] [Eusebius Hieronymus. "Sophronius" is sometimes added; "but this appears to be a mistake, arising from the fact that Jerome's friend Sophronius translated some of his works into Greek."—*Dictionary of Christian Biography.*]

[2] ["Mentiris, Ciceronianus es, non Christianus, ubi enim thesaurus tuus ibi et cor tuum."—Ep. xxii. ad Eustochium, *De Custodia Virginitatis.*]

Origenistic. The perpetual virginity of Mary he defended against Helvidius; fasting and celibacy against Jovinian; the worship of saints and relics against Vigilantius.

The Latin translation of which Jerome made a revision probably had its origin in Africa. It had existed from the middle of the second century,[1] was called *Vetus Interpres* and *Vetus Latina*, as well as *Itala*, and had been corrupted through negligence and caprice. Jerome began in the New Testament with the Gospels, in the Old Testament with the Psalms. The discovery of a complete copy of the *Hexapla* at Cæsarea, in Palestine, in 385, led him to complete his critical revision. Some of the amended books were lost, but the loss was of little importance, as he soon felt that he ought to translate the Old Testament from the Hebrew. With this end in view, he took lessons in that language at Calchis from a converted Jew (374–379), at Bethlehem from Bar Anina, who was unconverted, and who visited his scholar by night. The work lasted from 390 to 404, and, when finished, made way without the decision of any ecclesiastical council. Since the thirteenth century it has been called the "Vulgate."

Jerome was the author of many writings, some of which are geographical and antiquarian (*De Nominibus Hebraicorum*; *De Ritu et Nominibus Locorum Hebraicorum*). He made translations of some of Origen's Homilies, and of the *Chronicon* of Eusebius. His *De Viris Illustribus* [gives an account of the most prominent supporters of the Christian faith, beginning with Peter and ending with himself, and is of great value as a contribution to the history of the Church.

Jerome died probably on September 20, 420.]

[1] [A conclusion made from two passages in Tertullian, but sometimes not accepted. The point is discussed in Salmon's *Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 44, note (4th ed.).]

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE ORIGENISTIC CONTROVERSY (*continued*)—THE CONTROVERSY IN EGYPT AND AT CONSTANTINOPLE.

For the second phase of the controversy we have to look to Egypt, and to Constantinople, where, however, the personal, disagreeable element predominates to such a degree that at last the doctrinal question goes altogether into the background.

In Egypt there were two monks' parties. The one, chiefly in the Scetic desert, was devoted to a crass anthropomorphism; such as both John of Jerusalem and Epiphanius had condemned, and was violently opposed to the spiritualism and alleged heresies of Origen, and, indeed, to all free discussion. The other class consisted of the monks of Nitria, blind and passionate admirers of Origen, it is sometimes said, "who adopted his immature and erratic views and pressed them to extremes, showing that mechanical fidelity to the master which was apostasy from his spirit." This, however, could not be true of all of them, for we find some of their members, when they come to Constantinople, speaking to Epiphanius with a wisdom and moderation that put him to shame. In this party were conspicuous four monks, who were commonly called the "tall brethren" (ἀδελφοὶ μακροί), as literally deserving the name. Theophilus, the Bishop, himself originally, as we have seen, an admirer of Origen, had induced these monks to enter into the service of the Church at Alexandria; but, their conscience not allowing them to dispose of the Church funds in accordance with the Bishop's wishes, they soon returned to the Nitrian mountains. Theophilus took note of the reason of their departure, and, meditating revenge, resolved to take it by condemning the Origenists in general as heretics. This is one account of his change of view; and if any reject it as incorrect, or an insufficient explanation, it is not because they think Theophilus incapable of adopting

any creed that would suit his purpose. Another account, but one not incompatible with the first, is that he had been alarmed by the fanaticism of the more numerous party, some of whom had come to Alexandria with the intention of taking his life. He had somewhat appeased them by saying, "I behold in you the face of God"; but, not content with this flattering accommodation to their views, they had further demanded from him the condemnation of the writings of Origen, and extorted from him a promise which he found it advisable to keep.

At all events, the doctrines and works of Origen were condemned at a synod in Alexandria in 399 A.D., and the reading of Origen was declared to be an ecclesiastical offence. As the Origenistic monks would not submit to this decision, Theophilus invoked the help of the prefect of Egypt, and the refractory—those who stood firm—were barbarously treated by the soldiers. Upwards of eighty of them fled, first to Jerusalem, and then to Galilee, but, wherever they went, they were followed by the letters of Theophilus, denouncing them as wild, dangerous heretics. At last, finding toleration nowhere else, they resolved[1] to betake themselves to the capital and place themselves under the shadow of its Bishop —a man who, indeed, represented another school than that of Alexandria, but who, they heard, loved God and righteousness and liberty. It was Johannes Chrysostomus. Origenistic monks were not men with whose distinctive tenets he could sympathise, but when he saw the trace of suffering in the countenance of these exiles, who had been persecuted even unto blood, and who now supplicated his protection, he was moved even to tears, like Joseph, at the sight of his brethren. He gave them a hearty reception, only letting them know that they could not be admitted to the communion till their case was investigated and decided. He wrote to Theophilus, representing the unhappy treatment of these men, and begging him to be reconciled to them and to receive them again into the Church. The reply was a bitter letter of accusation against the fugitives. The monks, on their side, drew up a paper full of accusations against Theophilus and submitted it

[1] Probably not all who had fled from Egypt. There is some discrepancy as to the number.

to Chrysostom, declaring, at the same time, their intention of laying it before the Emperor (Arcadius). Chrysostom did what he could to restrain them, and wrote a second friendly letter to Theophilus, hoping that the matter might be settled without an appeal to the court. He was rewarded with a cutting answer, complaining of his wanton disregard of ecclesiastical canons and his unwarrantable interference in the affairs of a diocese that did not belong to him. The monks carried out their purpose. They obtained an audience of the Empress Eudoxia, who had a superstitious veneration for men of their order, and accordingly gave them a welcome reception, prayed for their blessing, and commended herself, her husband, and her children to their pious supplications. At the same time, she answered them that their cause would be inquired into before a council that would be held under the presidency of Chrysostom. It is said of this lady that she had the great faculty of knowing when to be silent and when to speak, and accordingly might safely predict that her weak husband, the Emperor, over whom she had an unbounded influence, would do whatsoever she desired. Theophilus was summoned, and forthwith, giving himself comparatively little concern about the monks, he resolved to effect the ruin of the bishop, whom he had long envied and detested, and who was now nominated to preside at his trial. He was a man of a cool, calculating understanding, which the fiercest passions could not cloud; but he was not uniformly successful. One of the reasons, indeed, why he hated Chrysostom so intensely, was because he had failed to set a creature of his own on the episcopal throne of Constantinople. On that creature, a presbyter named Isidore, he thought he could have counted. He had been his messenger to Rome during the war between Theodosius and Maximus, bearing handsome presents which were to be delivered to the victor after the sword had decided between the contending Emperors. But though Theophilus had opposed the elevation of Chrysostom, preferring a man by whom he could rule in Constantinople as he ruled in Alexandria, Chrysostom had offered him the hand of reconciliation, and he had taken it. The Alexandrian Bishop's opportunity had now come. By flattery, bribery, and calumny much might be accomplished in any city, but nowhere so much as

in Constantinople. It was not, however, with Constantinople that he began. He wrote to a number of bishops, vehemently assailing the writings of Origen, and, in particular, he communicated with Epiphanius, setting in motion the old zealot, who was an honest, godly man, and who cannot be severely blamed if he was somewhat accessible to flattery, especially when it was accompanied with fervent expressions of devotion to God as well as love for His truth. Thus incited by a man who had previously been at variance with him, Epiphanius first held a synod in Cyprus, at which a sentence of condemnation was pronounced against the Origenists, and then, travelling in the middle of winter, presented himself at Constantinople at the beginning of the year 403 A.D. He had previously written to Chrysostom, urging him to do in the capital what he himself had done in the island of which he was metropolitan; but, as the demand had not been complied with, he came full of suspicion and distrust. Chrysostom received him with cordiality, and with all the honours due to his age and character, and even invited him to dwell with him. But the Bishop of Constantia could hold no intercourse with him unless he concurred in the condemnation of Origen, which Chrysostom, though he was as far from being an Origenist as Epiphanius himself, still refused to do. Epiphanius then addressed himself to the clergy of Constantinople, and, though some opposition was encountered, it was arranged that, at a solemn service in the Church of the Apostles, he should denounce the writings of Origen and his adherents, particularly the bishop of the city. But when he was on his way to church on the appointed day, he received a communication from Chrysostom, warning him of dangerous consequences if he committed this new and heinous violation of canonical law.[1] About the same time, some of the persecuted monks approached the old man and made to him calm and mild representations. They inquired if he had read any of their writings, and, when he confessed that he had not, informed him that he also had been charged with heresy by Theophilus, but that they had read his books, and, finding the accusation to be unjust, had defended him.

[1] Immediately after his arrival, Epiphanius had preached and had consecrated a deacon.

At what precise moment this conversation took place we know not, but Epiphanius took the warning of Chrysostom. He abandoned his purpose. Probably, though he did not at first show it, he was moved by the kindness and deference shown him on his arrival by Chrysostom, as well as by the appearance and words of the monks. Still more probably, he began to suspect that he had fallen into a trap. As he was a thoroughly honest man, it moved his indignation to think that the accusation of heresy was used mainly as a pretext, and that he was himself used as a tool. He would proceed no further in that business. He hastened to depart before Theophilus should arrive. Was there another reason—an inner voice that told the old man his end was near? That might be, though we need not accept the view of those who ascribed to him the prophetic gift. When he was embarking for Cyprus, he said to the friends who accompanied him to the shore: "I leave to you the city, the palace, and hypocrisy, but I go, for I must make great haste." He died on the voyage (403 A.D.).[1]

But Theophilus had lost only one instrument. It was the lot of Chrysostom, as it had been of Origen and Athanasius, not to name a greater, to have many bitter enemies,—men and women who hated him because of his fidelity to God and truth,—and with these the Bishop of Alexandria had been keeping up a long correspondence. He had found excuses for postponing the fulfilment of the imperial command (that he should appear at Constantinople) to the summer season, and, when he came, he came neither unattended nor empty-handed. He was accompanied by a number of Egyptian bishops and brought much gold, knowing well the sort of key with which he would best win entrance among the courtiers of Constantinople. Chrysostom, who had really done nothing to deserve his displeasure, and had rather deprecated than prompted the summons that brought him to the capital,

[1] There is a story sometimes told of Chrysostom and Epiphanius, in which the latter is introduced as saying: "I hope you will not die a bishop," and the former: "I hope you will not return to your bishopric." This is unworthy of Epiphanius, and, still more, of Chrysostom. I have seen the story in two early authorities, but neither of them vouches for it, and one of them certainly indicates that he does not believe it. [Socrates, vi. 14; Sozomen, viii. 15. Socrates is the sceptic: *ταῦτα οὐκ ἔχω εἰπεῖν, εἰ ἀληθῆ ἔλιξαν οἱ ἐμοὶ ἀπαγγείλαντες.*]

treated him in a spirit of brotherly kindness, and offered to accommodate him and his numerous friends in one of the ecclesiastical buildings. The invitation was spurned, and quarters were found for the Bishop of Alexandria with his train in a public—an imperial—building outside the city. That was significant; but, though there were friends at court, a little time was still needed to gain the Empress, and then the accused would become the accuser and the judge. A happy expedient was resorted to for winning that vain, capricious woman. She had once robbed a widow of her last possession, a vineyard. Now, Chrysostom had what Theophilus accounted a great weakness: he could not be silent when he saw injustice, and this act he could not but think a crime, though the deceased husband had been a fallen courtier. He wrote to her in language to which she was not accustomed; but, though she took offence, there was no violent outbreak, and soon there was an apparent and superficial reconciliation. Now it was contrived that a report should reach her ears that Chrysostom had not only scourged her vices, but had called her "a Jezebel" from the pulpit. The report was credited. Eudoxia was gained, and so also, within a few days, was her husband. In the house of an eminent lady, Eugraphia, the enemies of Chrysostom took their measures. There were several bishops present, and also two deacons who had been excommunicated by Chrysostom, the one for adultery, the other for manslaughter. Preparations having been completed, a synod was held, not at Constantinople, for the feeling of the multitude was with Chrysostom, and not with his powerful foes, but at an imperial estate in the neighbourhood of Chalcedon. This estate was called "The Oak" (ἡ δρῦς); hence the name by which the infamous assembly is known—the Synod at the Oak (σύνοδος πρὸς τὴν δρῦν—(*Synodus ad Quercum*). Thirty-six bishops were present, mostly from Egypt. Many and strange were the accusations against Chrysostom, whose ruin, of course, was the one object in contemplation. He had assailed the clergy, calling them corrupt and worthless; he had squandered the property of the Church; instead of exercising the hospitality which became a bishop, he actually ate alone; he had invaded other men's dioceses (that is remarkable); he employed in his

sermons unusual expressions and turgid phrases; he had called Epiphanius a fool; and, above all, he had, when preaching, been guilty of high treason.

While the proceedings were going on at "The Oak," Chrysostom remained in Constantinople, where no fewer than forty bishops had gathered around him, all filled with anxiety, for there went a report that he was to be beheaded. That was not to be his fate; but the fear was far from groundless, and, when some of his friends were weeping in deep pain, he besought them not to make his heart heavier by their tears. And why should they weep? "The world," he said, "is a market; we buy and sell and then depart. Are we better than the patriarchs, the prophets, and the apostles, that we should not go down to the grave? Let the widowed Church, for which you say you weep, trust in God. The sacred office did not begin with me, nor will it end with me. Moses died, and was not Joshua raised up? Samuel departed, and was not David sent? Jeremiah was taken, and Baruch succeeded him. Elijah was received into heaven, and did not Elisha prophesy? Paul died the martyr's death, and did he not leave Timothy, Titus, Apollos, and many others behind?"

While he was thus surrounded, and was rather imparting than receiving comfort, a summons came from the "holy" synod at "The Oak," but he did not obey it. Four times it was repeated with the same result. Sentence of deposition was pronounced, and, in the report sent to the Emperor, he was requested to use force, if necessary, for carrying out their decision, and, at the same time, to see to it—for this was a matter which did not belong to them—that John was punished for his treason. As soon as this decision became known among the people, great commotion arose among them, and they crowded round their beloved teacher day and night, manifesting an enthusiastic attachment which could not but convince the court that it would be perilous to attempt the execution of a capital sentence. In language similar to that which had been employed by others when threatened with violence, Chrysostom exclaimed, in addressing the multitude: "What have I to fear? Death? To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. Banishment? The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. The loss of goods? We brought

nothing into the world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." As neither space nor death could separate Christ from His Church, so, whatever he might suffer, he would never in soul be separated from his flock.

The sentence was banishment. His desire was not to excite, but to appease, as well as comfort, the multitude. Giving himself up to the soldiers who were sent against him, he was, three days after his condemnation, conducted, in the darkness of the evening, to a vessel, in which he was translated to the southern shore of the Propontis (Sea of Marmora). He was landed at a town of Bithynia, called Prænetos, where he was to wait further orders. In a letter written to a friend from that place, he says: "Were I to please man, I should not be the servant of Christ. If the Empress wishes to saw me asunder, I have Isaiah for my pattern; to drown me, I think of Jonah; to cast me into the fire or to the wild beasts, I remember Daniel and his companions in Babylon; to stone me, it is what the first martyr suffered; to take my head, it was the lot of the Baptist."

Chrysostom's enemies had not long enjoyed their triumph when they learned that the whole city was in a ferment. The recall of the banished bishop was impetuously demanded, and it seemed as if Providence sided with the people. Terror was struck into the souls of the persecutors by an earthquake—above all, into the soul of the Empress, who, believing it to be a judgment of the Almighty, embraced the knees of the Emperor, beseeching him to bring back the servant of the Lord. At the same time, with a mendacity often found in company with superstition, she wrote to Chrysostom, assuring him that, far from approving what had been done, she had been innocent of the knowledge, and taking God to witness how much she loved and honoured the holy man by whose hands her children had been baptized.

Accordingly, the Bishop, after only a few days' absence, was brought back and welcomed by the exulting people, a great torchlight procession accompanying him from the harbour, and even the Jewish population joining in the rejoicings. Chrysostom's desire was not to preach till his character was vindicated and his right recognised by a general synod, but he found it impossible to resist the people, who, of

course, saw no reason why he should show the least regard to a cruel and iniquitous sentence.

John's enemies fled, Theophilus among them. The Bishop of Alexandria did not take his departure without cause, as the people were seeking him that they might cast him into the sea. But too soon—after two months—his opportunity came again, and Chrysostom was banished, never to be recalled. Anew the slumbering hatred of the Empress was awakened, the occasion being as follows. I take the short account of Schaff, desiring to make a brief addition :—

"Incensed by the erection of a silver statue to Eudoxia, close to the church of St. Sophia, and by the theatrical performances connected with it, he had with unwise and unjust exaggeration opened a sermon on Mark vi. 17 ff, in commemoration of John the Baptist, with the personal allusion: 'Again Herodias rages, again she raves; again she dances, and again she demands the head of John upon a charger.'" [1]

This is a correct statement so far as it goes, but the two ancient authorities, Socrates and Sozomen (Schaff refers to the former), both state explicitly that John had first, in a general way, attacked the games, which seem to have been to some extent licentious and heathenish, and had rebuked those who took part in them and those who tolerated them. For this offence, which may have been an indiscretion, the Empress, being "exceedingly piqued," determined to have her revenge, and to convoke once more a synod for the purpose. It was after he was made aware of this that the Bishop delivered the celebrated sermon containing the words quoted.[2] This alters the case materially, and, if we bear in mind what has frequently been urged in justification of freedoms used by preachers in generations far nearer our own time,—namely, that it was necessary to allow considerable latitude to the pulpit when there was no press to form or to give vent to public opinion,—then, whether we may think John wise or not, we should hardly apply the words "unjust exaggeration" to the language he used on the superstitious, unrighteous, false, and cruel woman who, not for the first time, was plotting the ruin of the eloquent and faithful preacher.

[1] [*History of the Christian Church*, vol. iii. p. 713.]

[2] The sermon is not preserved.

To accomplish her end, Eudoxia wrote to Theophilus, requesting him either to attend the synod which Chrysostom had so earnestly desired for the vindication of his character, or to send instructions as to the method of procedure. He did the latter; and, in accordance with his advice, the synod, gained by court influence, declared that John had violated the canons laid down at Antioch in 341 A.D., as he had assumed the duties of his office though his sentence had not been removed by a synod greater than that which had condemned him. It was contended, on the other side, that the decisions against Athanasius of that Arian Assembly of Antioch, held under the presidency of Eusebius of Nicomedia, had no authority; and, that question waived, it was argued that John had been unjustly condemned by a body which had no legal right to try him, that he had left the city in submission to the imperial power, and that to the same power he owed his recall.

This reasoning had no effect: the sentence of the *Synodus ad Quercum* was confirmed. This was about Easter of the year 404 A.D., and on the eve of the solemn day, when the people were assembled for watching and prayer, among them being not fewer than three thousand persons who were to be baptized within a few hours, they were surprised and dispersed by a rude force. Assembling without the city in the open air, they were again attacked and scattered, some of the white robes being reddened with blood. And not only were the assemblies of the unarmed Johannites thus cruelly interrupted: John himself narrowly escaped assassination in his own dwelling. At length, on the 17th of June, the Emperor, whom it had been found difficult to move, issued the command that the Bishop should be removed from the city within three days. After commending his people, and particularly his clergy, with the deaconesses, to the Divine mercy, John quietly gave himself up to the watch, which was to conduct him first to Nice. "With him," said one of the old writers, "departed the angel of the Church." As if to cut off at once all hope of his return, his place was hastily filled, his successor being a feeble old man, Arsacius by name, who had allowed himself to be used against his Bishop at "The Oak."

From Nice, where John was allowed to remain four weeks, he wrote to his friends without a word of bitterness, so expressing his trust in Him who often appears through the darkness and the storm, and works His wonders after most have ceased to hope. What was the disgrace that had come upon him in their drawing him from his office and putting another in his place? Barabbas had been preferred to Christ.

He learned at Nice that the place of banishment assigned to him was a desolate town, Cucusus (Koskan), between Isauria and Armenia and Cilicia. Through rough, pathless regions, sometimes experiencing great sympathy and even reverence, sometimes exposed to danger from bands of Isaurian robbers or troops of fanatical monks, he at length reached the place of his destination, where, though the bishop showed him kindness, his perils were scarcely diminished. Amid his varied hardships and privations, we find him writing to Antioch, Cæsarea, Rome, and other cities, inciting, above all, to missionary enterprises, for which, indeed, he even succeeded in collecting some money. Money he collected also for the redemption of captives from the Isaurians. To Constantinople, where a schism had been caused by his removal, and the Johannites were persecuted, he sent not only letters but tracts, one of which bears the remarkable title: *τὸν ἑαυτὸν μὴ ἀδικοῦντα οὐδεὶς παραβλάψαι δύναται* ["None can injure the man who does not wrong himself"].

But the severe climate—the burning heat of summer and the cutting cold of winter—rapidly undermined his constitution, which, indeed, had suffered greatly before his arrival. In the winter of 406 A.D., he was obliged to flee from the Isaurians, with a multitude of other fugitives, through snow and ice, and to wander about till they found a place of refuge in a fortress called Arabissum, about ten miles distant. Here, confined as in a prison, and yet not safe from the Isaurians, he struggled with severe illness, from which he never fully recovered; but his courage never sank, and he was able to sustain others, both then and on his return to Koskan, where he would have been content to remain and die.

Meanwhile the Johannites had conceived some hope. Innocent, Bishop of Rome, who entirely disapproved of the proceedings against Chrysostom, and, along with him,

Honorius, the western Emperor, brother of Arcadius, had interposed, saying that the banished man should be recalled, or, at least, that he should be tried by a competent tribunal, the Assembly at The Oak not having been a lawful synod, Innocent, indeed, calling it a farce. But the interposition was vain. The court of Constantinople, though Eudoxia was now dead, hated the Johannites as intensely as the court of France, twelve or thirteen centuries afterwards, hated the Jansenists; and, unhappily, the holy and truly wise words of the venerable sufferer, who had been driven from his high office in the capital, whom sharp misery had now literally worn to the bone, and who was bearing all with heavenly meekness—unhappily his wise words, by which he was exercising a world-wide episcopate, were as goads, not only to his friends, but to his enemies. It was stinging to know that the man whom they thought they had crushed, stood unbent and powerful before the world, and that his cause was espoused by the Emperor and by the greatest bishop of the west. Once more the feeble Arcadius was wrought upon, and it was decreed that Chrysostom should be sent to the utmost boundary of the Empire, and be cut off from all intercourse with the Christian world. The place assigned him now was Pityus, on the eastern shore of the Black Sea, near the ancient Colchis. Chrysostom did not reach it. It was only the inward strength that was unabated. Though the sword was bright and sharp as ever, the sheath was sadly worn. When he came, with two soldiers who kept him, to Comana in Pontus, and rested in a church near that place,—a church consecrated to a martyr called Basiliskus,—he had a dream which filled him with heavenly consolation. The martyr appeared to him and said: "Be of good cheer, my brother John; to-morrow we shall be together." In the morning, faint and weary, he wished to pray and prepare himself for joining the glorious company, and so he requested the two soldiers to remain till eleven o'clock, but he was compelled to resume his journey. After less than two hours, it was found impossible to proceed, and Chrysostom was brought back to the church of Basiliskus, where he clothed himself in white, partook of the sacrament by the martyr's grave, and departed, with his last breath repeating the words

that had been the motto and the watchword of his life: *Δόξα τῷ θεῷ πάντων ἕνεκεν* ["Glory to God for all!"].

Thus, after more than three years' banishment, after three months' weary wandering, and in sickness and weakness, died, on the fourteenth of September, 407 A.D., aged about sixty years, the greatest orator of Christian antiquity, who felt as deeply as any man that ever lived that the kingdom of God is not in word but in power. Eight months afterwards died Arcadius, and Eudoxia had had a painful end soon after the ejection of her victim. In the year 438 A.D. Chrysostom's body was brought back with great honour to Constantinople, where the Emperor, Theodosius II., falling down before the coffin, begged forgiveness for the crime perpetrated by his parents, especially his mother. John's bones were laid in the Church of the Apostles, and the schism was healed. The Johannites again assembled for worship with their fellow-Christians of the capital.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

CHRYSOSTOM.

"WHAT women the Christians have!" said the eminent heathen Libanius when speaking of Anthusa, the mother of his pupil and friend Johannes.[1] That widowed woman gave her son a Christian education, but not a valetudinarian one, for she was not afraid to trust him to the philosopher. Hers is a name honoured with that of Nonna, the mother of Gregory Nazianzen, and of Monica, the mother of Augustine. John first became an advocate; but though he had such gifts as a speaker that Libanius said he should have desired to see him his successor as teacher of eloquence had the Christians not stolen him, he soon abandoned his profession, being shocked at the wickedness and the evil arts of which it made him cognisant. He was baptized and appointed lector by Meletius; but, soon after his mother's death, he betook himself to the ascetic life, which he led on the mountains near Antioch, first in a monastery,[2] and afterwards, for two years, in a cave, when he is said to have committed the whole Bible to memory. His health suffered, however, and he returned to Antioch, where he was ordained deacon in 381, and presbyter in 386 A.D. Chrysostom was far from taking an unfavourable view of a retired life of contemplation and devotion. He defended it both when he was leading, and after he had abandoned it. At the same time, he knew how to defend an active public life, and to put it in a still more favourable

[1] [Chrysostom, *Ad Viduam Juniorem*. See note in Schaff's *History*, vol. iii. p. 934.] His father was Secundus, a στρατηλάτης, or *magister militum*.

[2] "If out of filial regard he abstained from deserting his home for a monastery, he would make a monastery of his home." This, of course, refers to a time when Anthusa still lived. In 374 A.D., when severe measures were taken against magical arts, he fished the leaves of a magic book out of the Orontes, contended about them with a friend, and threw them back as a soldier was observed approaching.

light than the other, as in a well-known passage where occurs the figure: "It is not he who sits at the helm in the harbour, but he who guides the ship safely in the storm, that approves himself a good steersman." It was in Antioch that he won his unequalled reputation as a preacher, and it was won especially by his famous discourses, twenty-one in number, "On the Statues." A tumult had arisen in the city in consequence of burdens imposed to meet the expenses of the war with Maximus, and, during it, the populace not only stormed the palace of the governor, but, proceeding to the market-place, tore down the statues of the Emperor and his sons, dragged them through the streets, and, in their wild excitement, even made Theodosius their song. The prætorium, too, was attacked, the governor saving himself by flight. The ringleaders were promptly seized and executed, but a panic pervaded the city, and, during the period of suspense, while the aged Bishop, whose name was Flavian, hastened to Constantinople to intercede with Theodosius, Chrysostom found a rich field for his eloquence, and not only instructed and corrected, but sustained and comforted the people, who were living in the hourly expectation of the decisive, and, it might be, fatal word from the imperial seat. On this occasion, happily, and not as, afterwards, in the case of Thessalonica, the Emperor was lenient, as John predicted. It was a long period of anxiety, during which many fled the city, and those who remained were subdued and still as death, that was thus improved; but the great preacher could also turn to account the deep impression of a moment. Once, on the way to Church in a hard winter, he was moved by the sight of a number of poor people, ill clad and ill fed, and so, letting the discourse he had prepared lie over, he poured forth his soul so that all hearts were softened, and all hands opened, in response to the urgent appeal. But he was admired and applauded by many who, as he often complained, never truly received his teaching.[1] The eunuch Eutropius, an infamous upstart, who had become minister of Arcadius, heard him at Antioch with much approval, and, when the see of the capital became vacant (397), procured his elevation, with the hearty consent

[1] Pickpockets were numerous among the auditors, and Chrysostom recommended that purses should be left behind.

of the clergy and the people. John was drawn out of Antioch before he knew, or, at all events, had time to consider, what was designed for him; and, when he came to Constantinople, he found everything prepared for his consecration, which, in the presence of a great number of bishops, Theophilus, the Metropolitan of Alexandria, was obliged to perform (February 398 A.D.).[1] It was, of course, the highest ecclesiastical position in the east to which John was raised, and all were satisfied that the eloquent preacher would fill it well, and that to go to hear him would be, as indeed it was regarded, "as good as a play." But John's idea of his office was not the common one. Popularity was nothing to him if he were not allowed to speak the truth, and denounce the external dogmatism and inward hollowness, and all the corruption and vices that prevailed among small and great, among clergy and people. Among the first that were offended at his fidelity was Eutropius, who, partly in revenge, endeavoured to take from the church the right of asylum; but soon that wretched man, when his head was demanded by the Goths, and Eudoxia was ready to deliver up her favourite, embraced the altar, and there, on the following Sunday, while he was clinging to it, Chrysostom preached on the vanity of all earthly things. But when soldiers came for the fugitive, the bishop would not give him up. He covered him with his own body, and consented to appear himself before the Emperor as a prisoner rather than allow the sanctuary to be violated. Eutropius, however, thinking himself no longer secure, left the holy asylum, and, being apprehended on his flight, was banished to Cyprus, and was afterwards brought back to Chalcedon and there executed.

While Chrysostom's truthfulness, or, as some put it, his reckless boldness, in preaching, made him enemies, not less deep was the hatred he incurred by the strict administration of discipline. So, as we have seen, when the Origenistic monks arrived, it was the more easy for Theophilus to effect his overthrow, and shorten his life. Chrysostom has been compared with Cato, with Ambrose, with Fénélon, with Spener, with Luther, with the Apostle Paul, and it would not be difficult to point out a degree of resemblance to many

[1] Chrysostom's *Sermo Enthronisticus* (Inaugural Discourse) is lost.

besides; but it will be agreed that, though he had an intellect of extraordinary activity, his greatness was mainly moral and spiritual.[1] Thomas Aquinas said he would not give Chrysostom's "hortulus" on Matthew for the whole city of Paris. Well; Chrysostom wrote many homilies besides, likewise treatises and liturgies, but he has left in history an image that speaks more eloquently than a thousand homilies —one of those images to which we turn when all is doubt and darkness, and speculation and reasoning seem vain, and that then speak to us of graces that are not earth-born. Through the vast temple where all are alive to God, we hear him whisper to us what one from the dead had whispered to him: "Be of good cheer; to-morrow we shall be together."

[1] *Oratio, meditatio, tentatio* (Melanchthon): none of these was wanting in Origen, Athanasius, or Chrysostom.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE ORIGENISTIC CONTROVERSY (*continued*)—CLOSE OF THE CONTROVERSY—POINTS INVOLVED IN THE DISCUSSION.

We have altogether lost sight of the question as to Origen and his followers or admirers. It was agitated anew about the middle of the sixth century, and ended in the condemnation of a number of propositions ascribed to the Alexandrian. The principal points held by the Origenists may be reduced to four.

1. *The Inequality of the Persons of the Trinity.*

The doctrine of subordination, though not necessarily involved in the figure of the three concentric circles, was explicitly taught by Origen; and, though he taught with equal explicitness the doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son, and, indeed, was the first to formulate it as it was subsequently adopted in the creed, yet, from the way in which he presented the former, and from his fluctuating expressions as to the ground of the Son's existence, he was, as we have noticed more than once, called by Epiphanius the "father of Arianism."

2. *The Pre-existence of Human Souls.*

Spiritual beings were all originally of the same order, and perfectly pure; but, as they were endowed with free will, some of them fell so far as to become evil spirits, while others fell to the human condition—were, for punishment of their sins, imprisoned in mortal bodies. The soul of Christ forms no exception to this doctrine of pre-existence. The Eternal Logos, before the incarnation, united His Divine nature with one of the unfallen, and therefore incorporeal, intelligences. The assumption of a human body and the redemption of sinful

men had that antecedent spiritual union as its necessary presupposition.

3. *The View of the Future Life as a State of Probation.*

Passing over the view of the Origenists, a view not peculiar to them, that the resurrection body is purer and more subtle than the natural body, we come to their doctrine that the state of souls after death, whether they be blessed or be miserable, is still a state in which all have the power of rising to a new height, or of sinking to a new depth. In that other world none need despair, for the atonement of Christ is of such illimitable extent that, through Him, even the lowest of fallen angels may ultimately attain to blessedness. Many of the Origenists held confidently—and certainly Origen himself, though he expressly said he could not dogmatise on the subject as on some other questions, was disposed to believe—that not only was there still the possibility of salvation for all, but that no rational being would be everlastingly lost.

It may be noticed with regard to Jerome that, while he emphatically rejected this doctrine of future probation and final restoration, he held that a purification would be required after the resurrection for the righteous. "I believe," he says in his Commentary on Luke, "that, after the resurrection of the dead, we shall still need a sacrament to advance and purify us, for none will be able to arise pure from stain, nor will any soul be found which shall at once be free from all faults." [1]

4. *The Doctrine of Absorption.*

Another opinion ascribed to the Origenists is "that the progress of spiritual life in heaven is in reality a step onward in a continuous process by which created beings are being absorbed into the uncreated, until God becomes all in all." It is possible that some may have held this tenet, but it does not seem to flow necessarily from Origen's peculiar principles; and indeed the conception of God as an absolute and eternal Ruler over an eternal kingdom, which the Origenists are said likewise to have formed, excludes the idea of universal absorp-

[1] [*In Lucam.* Hom. xiv. vii. 288, Ed. 1737.]

tion. Besides, we know that in later centuries this tenet has been falsely attributed to others through a misunderstanding of the language used on the elevation of the soul above the material universe, and its perfect union and communion with Him who created it.[1]

There are some at the present day who, while rejecting the Origenistic doctrines, and admitting that the germs of the most important of them may be found in the *Περὶ ἀρχῶν* (of which we have for the most part only a translation), yet deny, or hold it to be very improbable, that Origen himself wandered into actual heresy, admitting, however, that, as he began to write very early, and wrote so much,—he was the author of six thousand separate books and tracts, mostly lost, —he may have sent into the world many ill-advised statements which wilder spirits afterwards pushed to an extreme.

Before passing to the controversies relating to the Person of Christ, I might, in connection with the Origenistic controversy, dwell on a philosophic bishop who was a known heretic at the time of his ordination, and, though he did not obtrude them, felt under no obligation to abandon his peculiar views afterwards. Baur[2] and others dwell at considerable length on this remarkable divine, whose name was Synesius. I shall content myself with giving a brief note from Guericke:

"Until past middle life he had been a thoughtful and highly-esteemed pagan, whose contemplative spirit was much attracted to Platonism. In the year 409 or 410 he was unanimously chosen bishop of Ptolemais, although he was married, and perhaps as yet unbaptized. He did not conceal

[1] "God's will and power is the ground of all existence. . . . God must *necessarily*, and *from eternity*, put forth a self-imparting activity, and exercise a self-imparting love. . . . All spirits were originally alien to God, and had equal endowments. . . . One consequence of this fall of pre-existent spirits, was the creation, for purposes of discipline only, of the material corporeal world. . . . The issue at which the present world aims, is the re-union of fallen spirits with God, *ἀποκατάστασις*. . . . But when evil has become entirely extinct in this era or stadium in the history of creation, it will again break forth in some future period, . . . and thus the history of the universe, from everlasting to everlasting, is that of alternate apostasy and recovery,"—Guericke [*Church Hist.* p. 230 (trans.)]. Clement had asserted an inalienable freedom of the will (to the prejudice of the doctrine of human corruption) against the Gnostic idea of subjection to evil, by a power above and out of man.

[2] [*Die Christliche Kirche vom Anfang des 4ten bis zum Ende des 6ten Jahrhunderts*, s. 52.]

the fact that his views on many points—especially respecting the pre-existence of the human soul, the end of the world, and the resurrection of the body—were different from the church doctrine. But the clergy commended him to the teaching of the Holy Spirit; and although his doctrines were the same which Theophilus of Alexandria had condemned as Origenistic, yet the Alexandrine bishop confirmed the election. Synesius died about 431. The most important of his writings are:—Lib. ii., *Περ ὶπρονοίας*; *Dion* (upon the relation of scientific culture to the immediate intuition of Divine things); Lib. i., *Περὶ ἐνυπνίων* (an investigation of the Platonic ideas); 10 hymns; *Περὶ βασιλείας* (a politico-religious address to the Emperor Arcadius); and 156 letters."[1]

[1] [*Church Hist.* p. 344 (Shedd's trans.).]

CHAPTER L.

DOCTRINE OF THE PERSON OF CHRIST BEFORE THE TIME OF NESTORIUS.

When the Divine nature of Christ had been established against the Arians, as, at an earlier period, His human nature was against the Docetæ, it became necessary also to discuss and settle the question as to the union of the two natures, or, in other words, as to the constitution of Christ's Person.

In the process of doctrinal development, the transition into the territory of Christology was inevitable. Now, here there were two possible extremes, even if the deity and the humanity were both admitted. There might be such a separation of the natures as to conflict with the idea of these existing in one person; or there might be such a fusion of the natures as, while it did not destroy the idea of a single person, formed, at the same time, a new nature, neither Divine nor human. But it is desirable that, before noticing these extremes, we should set before us the views of those by whom both the essential deity and the perfect humanity were rejected, and of those by whom, while the former was received, the latter was denied.

To a certain extent the views of these parties coincide. The Arians, who conceded neither the essential deity nor the perfect humanity, thought that in Christ the Logos—the first creature of the Supreme God—took the place of the human νοῦς or πνεῦμα ["spirit"]. Manifestly this is not properly a union of two natures. That cannot be called human nature which is without human nature's highest and most important constituent. Now, about the year 362, Apollinarius,[1] Bishop of Laodicea, came forward with his peculiar apprehension of the Person of Christ, for which he contended in the interest

[1] [The strictly correct form of the name; "Apollinaris" is the form commonly used.]

of the Nicene confession. It was necessary, he thought, to make to the Arians the concession that the Logos took the place of the human *νοῦς*, the Logos, however, being no creature, but co-eternal and co-essential with the Father. It was an untenable doctrine, he argued, that the Redeemer should be at once the same in substance as the Father, and the same in substance as men. In other words, it was impossible that perfect God and perfect man should be united in one Person. The conception of such a union involved gross absurdity; for two beings, having intelligence and will (*νοερὰ καὶ θελητικά*)[1] —two beings having self-consciousness—could no more constitute one person than two material objects could occupy the same space. In imagining such a union, you do not get the actual Christ of the gospel, but a fabulous, monstrous being, which Apollinarius was not afraid to compare with the Minotaur, the Centaur, the Chimæra, or similar creatures of the fancy. A second argument he adduced: that the idea of a perfect, complete man, involved the idea of sin: "Where there is a perfect man, there there is sin."[2] Sin has its seat in the *νοῦς*, and if Christ had this constituent of human nature as all other men have it, He must have been a sinner, and consequently could not be the Saviour of sinners. A third argument was that those who profess to believe that perfect God and perfect man were united to form one Person, involuntarily come to accept (in reality) merely an influence of the Logos on the man Christ Jesus, and to conceive of Him not as the God-man, but as a Divine man (not as *θεάνθρωπος*, but as *ἄνθρωπος ἔνθεος*). God is conceived of as dwelling in Christ as He dwells in other men, only in greater fulness.

By such considerations Apollinarius endeavoured to show that the doctrine of the completeness of Christ's human nature could not be held consistently with the creed adopted at Nice.

To elucidate this view psychologically, we must remember that Apollinarius was a trichotomist; he adopted the common division of human nature into three parts—the body

[1] *εἰ ἀνθρώπῳ τελείῳ, φησὶ, συνήφθη θεὸς τέλειος, δύο ἂν ἦσαν, εἷς μὲν φύσει υἱὸς θεοῦ, εἷς δὲ θετός*, Apollinarius, Ap. Greg. Nyss., c. 39, and c. 42.

[2] *ὅπου τέλειος ἄνθρωπος, ἐκεῖ ἁμαρτία.*

(σῶμα), the vital principle, or universal soul (ψυχὴ ἄλογος), and the rational soul (ψυχὴ λογική—νοῦς—πνεῦμα), which is the highest in man, and, to speak strictly, the sphere of his personality. Apollinarius was well aware that, this last being denied to Christ, the word "man" was not with perfect propriety applicable to Him, and so he laid stress on the clause (Phil. ii. 8), "being found in fashion as a man,"[1] in the light of which other passages are to be understood.

Apollinarius was condemned at a Roman synod in 373. The first canon of the Second Ecumenical Council (381), anathematises him and his followers. The sect, though persecuted by the State, maintained itself, in various ramifications and under various names, for a considerable period after the death of its founder, which took place in 390. The members of it that would not return to the Catholic Church were at last merged in the sect of the Monophysites. A number of the most eminent fathers of the period, including the two Gregories, combated the heresy in their writings, but it does not appear that any of them attempted a direct refutation of his ontological argument. The only thing that can be produced that looks like an attempt to meet that argument —and certainly it can be called nothing more—is found in the language of Gregory of Nazianzus: "Consider that within me also, one and the same person, both the human and the Divine Spirit can dwell;" which, instead of meeting the heresy of Apollinarius, is a remarkable illustration of one of the arguments by which it is supported—namely, that those who profess to believe that perfect God and perfect man are united in one Person involuntarily come to conceive of Christ simply as a Divine man (ἄνθρωπος ἔνθεος). Much more satisfactory was the admission often made, that the hypostatic union, being a thing altogether unique, was a mystery to which there was no analogy, and was to be received in humble faith.

The two great Oriental schools,—the Alexandrian and the Antiochian,—while they agreed in rejecting Apollinarianism, followed different directions in their Christology, and out of their conflicting tendencies arose the Nestorian controversy.

The Alexandrine school, holding fast the thoroughness of

[1] σχήματι εὑρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος.

the union of the two natures, and, at the same time, emphasising its mysteriousness, transferred the predicates of the one nature to the other, sometimes with a justifiable freedom, but sometimes also in a way that not only sounded paradoxical, but was extravagant and dangerous. "God was crucified for us;" "Mary brought forth God" (*θεοτόκος*): such language had been used before this century. As far back as the beginning of the third, Clement had used the words: "The God who suffered and is worshipped."[1] We are not to suppose, however, that these modes of expression were confined to the Alexandrine school, but this school delighted and abounded in them. One of them, the famous *θεοτόκος*, speedily became Catholic, but before it became Catholic what is sometimes represented as an equivalent phrase was used by Ambrose in his Christmas hymn:

"Talis decet partus Deum."

The Antiochian school, on the other hand, while holding the union, were more careful to maintain the distinction of the Divine and the human in the person of Christ; and some who belonged to this school were altogether opposed to the transference of predicates, and, so far from holding the thoroughness of the union at the birth of Christ, even taught that there was in Him a progressive revelation of the Divine corresponding with the ordinary progressive development of human nature.

The chief representative of this school was Theodorus of Mopsuestia. If, in the theory of Apollinarius, the human element—at least, that which is highest in man—vanished before the Divine, in that of Theodore the union between the two is of so free and loose a kind that the Divine rather seems to become the support and help of the human than to constitute with it one person. The chief point from which Theodore set out, and on which he insisted in opposition to Apollinarius, was that Christ had a real human soul. Otherwise, His temptation and His agony would remain inexplicable. He did not deny that there was a union between the two natures from the first; but that which was given with the birth was not fully developed till the resurrection of Christ.

[1] *τῷ παθόντι καὶ προσκυνουμένῳ θεῷ.*

"The growth in wisdom and grace which took place in his youth continued through His whole life, and as His moral strength increased through His perseverance in good, so the ἐνοίκησις ['indwelling'] of God was more fully realised." Theodore did not view the relation between Divine and human in Christ as either substantial or dynamic, but he reduced it to the idea of the Divine complacency (εὐδοκία). In reality, then, we have here mainly a moral unity. Theodore himself compared it with the relation between husband and wife, and designated it by the term συνάφεια, which, equally with the figure, denotes natures connected indeed, but, at the same time, persons remaining in their peculiarity and integrity. By this theory the human soul of Christ maintained its right, but could not be said to be so united with the Logos as to constitute one person.

Though the controversy raged chiefly in the east, the subject came under discussion in the west shortly before the elevation of Nestorius to the patriarchal throne of Constantinople. A monk named Leporius advocated opinions that seemed inconsistent with the unity of the Person, but he was convinced of his error by Augustine, and accepted the thesis of that divine, which has since become famous, and which we sometimes meet even in mediæval hymns: Christ was '*homo addendo quod non erat, non perdendo quod erat.*'[1] The Logos, accepting all that is man's became man: the man, receiving all that is God's, is nothing else than God. It is scarcely needful to point out that the doctrinal contrast now forcing itself upon the attention of the Church is similar to that which, in the third century, existed between the two classes of Monarchians, the tendency of the one being to make the human an accident of the Divine, and that of the other, to make the Divine an accident of the human. As had been the case in the Arian controversy, the dispute could not be confined to learned circles, and as soon as it was carried to the pulpit, the conflict inevitably became not only more general, but more keen. That it should have been conducted in such a spirit as afterwards disgraced the Church when it made the feast of love an apple of discord, or when it con-

[1] [Christ was "man by adding what He was not, not by losing what He was."]

tended about the procession of the Spirit, showing the opposite of His fruit, which is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness: this is to be explained, not merely by the character of the contending parties, or by the character of that age, in which rigid accuracy of theological expression was so frequently considered identical with saving faith, or by the intrinsic importance of the question as touching the honour of Christ, but also by the intolerant zeal with which already many sought the glorification of the Virgin, to whom it was now becoming customary to dedicate churches, and who, if only her great title, 'Mother of God' (θεοτόκος), were vindicated and secured, was destined to be exalted far above prophets and apostles. The worship of Mary was involved, and for this reason, as much, obviously, as for any other, the Nestorian controversy was of vast practical consequence, and has a permanent historical interest.

CHAPTER LI.

DOCTRINE OF THE PERSON OF CHRIST (*continued*).

Nestorius and his Heresy.

At Antioch the disciples were first called Christians; but, it has been said, "it was also the place where the spirit of scepticism developed the first germs of the heresy that did more than anything else to scatter and harass the flock of Christ—the Arian heresy. If in that city there was a sound school of biblical exegesis, there was in it a dialectical school which was a hot-bed of mischief." I am not sure that we can separate so sharply between the exegetical and the dialectical school, although certainly there were trained in Antioch eminent exegetes and preachers (as Chrysostom) whose spirit was anything but sceptical. But it is worth noticing that in Antioch, where both Arius and Eusebius of Nicomedia had studied under Lucian, Nestorius had been a presbyter, and had been imbued with the principles of the dialectical school before he was appointed Patriarch of Constantinople. His elevation took place in 428 A.D. That he was sufficiently conscious of his priestly dignity and power, and that he was of a harsh, persecuting spirit, appears from the language he used in his introductory discourse. "Purge me the land from heretics," he said to the Emperor Theodosius II., "and I will give you in return the kingdom of heaven. Help me to subdue them, and I will help you to subdue the Persians."[1] There was usually, it has been observed, something harsh and severe in ecclesiastical dignitaries when, to the natural tendency to magnify their authority, there was added the influence of the monastic life. Nestorius, like Chrysostom, in whom, however, good qualities predominated, had been a monk before he was invested with office at

[1] [Soc. vii. 29.]

Antioch. In point of fact, he set himself, with zeal as indiscriminate as it was intolerant, to the extirpation of all heresy. He made no distinction between essential and non-essential points. At the same time, his notions of heresy did not coincide with that of the Catholic Church. He took Pelagians under his protection, and, in combating the followers of Apollinarius, he adopted the view that in Christ there are two distinct subjects, and that, consequently, the Divine can in strictness be ascribed only to the Logos and the human only to the man.

The use of the term *θεοτόκος*, which occurs in Origen, and in the letter written by Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria, to Alexander, Bishop of Byzantium, at the outbreak of the Arian controversy, and which had been adopted by Athanasius and other celebrated fathers, had now become common both in the east and in the west; and when Nestorius came to Constantinople, he observed a prevalent tendency, not only to call Mary by that name, but to make of her a sort of goddess. He disapproved both of the seeming confusion of the natures in Christ and of the proneness to idolise His mother; and, to meet both evils, a presbyter named Anastasius, whom he had brought with him from Antioch, opened, not only with his approval, but, it is generally believed, at his desire, the controversy from the pulpit by protesting against the *θεοτόκος*. Mary was a creature, and could not give birth to God. It was sufficiently honourable for her, as Nestorius afterwards said, to be called *χριστοτόκος* ["Mother of Christ"], while the Man born of her might be called *θεοφόρος* or *θεοδόχος*, for God "dwelleth in Him as in a temple."

The promulgation of such views by Nestorius and his presbyter caused great commotion. One preacher, denouncing the appellation *θεοτόκος*, was interrupted by an advocate before the whole assembly. When the bishop himself was setting forth from the pulpit the grounds for his preference of the word *χριστοτόκος*, a layman caused a violent disturbance by exclaiming: "The eternal Logos Himself has submitted to a second birth." One party shouted in favour of *θεοτόκος*, the other in favour of *χριστοτόκος*. Nestorius went on endeavouring to make himself audible, and when his voice

became indistinguishable, it was in denouncing the man who had first interrupted him as a rude, wretched, impious blasphemer.

Afterwards, Proclus, Bishop of Cyzicus, being invited to preach at a feast held in honour of the Virgin, spoke most extravagantly, in the presence of Nestorius, of the glory of Mary as the mother of God, and at the same time gave his audience to understand that those who withheld the title from her denied the Divinity of her Son. After the preacher had finished, Nestorius arose and warned the people not to allow themselves to be blinded by the splendour of the rhetoric to which they had listened. Subsequently, he explained in public discourse that he held the title *θεοτόκος* to be allowable in a certain sense. But he had aroused a spirit which he could not lay. Placards in front of the churches stigmatised him as another Paul of Samosata, and once, when he was about to ascend the pulpit, an audacious monk threw himself in his way and attempted to prevent him. The offender was banished from the city.

The nephew and successor of Theophilus, Cyril of Alexandria, now mingled in the strife. Though not infamous like his uncle, he was ambitious and passionate; but, understanding that Nestorius was held in consideration at court, he was wise enough to begin moderately. He first addressed himself to the Egyptian monks, among whom were adherents of Nestorius, and offered the only defence of the title *θεοτόκος* of which it admits, but which is satisfactory only to those whose tendency is to merge the human in the Divine. "As ordinary mothers," he said, "although the human body only, and not also the soul, is formed out of their substance, are called mothers, not of the body only, but of the whole man, consisting of both body and soul; in like manner we ought to say, with regard to Mary, that the eternal Word begotten of the Father is, in consequence of the assumption of human nature, born of her according to the flesh."

Such is the explanation; but Nestorius himself had little objection to the *θεοτόκος*, if "according to the flesh" (*κατὰ σάρκα*) was used along with it.

In the letter which contained this explanation, and which was circulated among multitudes besides the monks, Cyril

gave great offence to Nestorius by arguing that to refuse the name to the mother was to deny the Divinity of the Son. There ensued a correspondence, the result of which was to confirm and exasperate both. All the great patriarchs now take part in the struggle. John of Antioch besought Nestorius not to contend about a word which, according to his own admission, might be used in a correct sense. Both Cyril and Nestorius sent a statement of the case to Cœlestine, Bishop of Rome, the former with success, not only because Cœlestine's views were already more in harmony with his, but because he sent his statement not only in Greek, but in Latin, a language which the Bishop of Rome understood. A synod was held in Rome in 430 A.D. The heresy of Nestorius was condemned; and it was decreed that, if he did not recant within ten days after his reception of the decision, he was to be excommunicated, Cyril being empowered to carry the sentence into execution. Here was a usurpation which, though the power of the Roman bishop was undoubtedly great, would have been inconceivable at this period had not Cœlestine believed that Nestorius was in such general odium as to blind the Christian world to its arrogance.

In fact, however, the decision of Rome was not sufficient. Further procedure, especially the summoning of an œcumenical council, was needful to effect the removal of the Bishop of Constantinople. But first Cyril, thinking it desirable to lay before Nestorius the propositions which he must retract or disavow if he would escape deposition, held a synod at Alexandria, at which were drawn up twelve anathematisms. These were transmitted to Nestorius, with a letter "written in the spirit of Christian love," says a Roman Catholic historian, who compares Cyril, as a man called of God to defend the faith, with Athanasius and Augustine. I content myself with stating the first and the twelfth of these anathematisms:—

"Whosoever does not confess that Immanuel is very God, and that the holy Virgin is *θεοτόκος*, inasmuch as she bore the incarnate Logos of God according to the flesh, let him be anathema."[1]

[1] Εἴ τις οὐχ ὁμολογεῖ θεὸν εἶναι κατὰ ἀλήθειαν τὸν Ἐμμανουὴλ, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο θεοτόκον τὴν ἁγίαν παρθένον· γεγέννηκε γὰρ σαρκικῶς σάρκα γεγονότα τὸν ἐκ θεοῦ λόγον· ἀνάθεμα ἔστω.

"Whosoever does not confess that the Logos of God has suffered in the flesh, and has been crucified in the flesh, and has tasted death in the flesh, and that He has become the first-begotten from the dead, as, being God, He is the life and the author of life, let him be anathema."[1]

In some of the propositions (to speak of them in a form to which they may be easily reduced) it is plainly taught—the very words, indeed, are used—that there was in Christ a ἕνωσις φυσική, which, sharply interpreted, would mean that the two natures were so fused as to constitute a third.

Nestorius replied with twelve counter-anathematisms, which have not come down to us in the Greek, but have been preserved in Latin by a lay contemporary, Marius Mercator, who passed some time in Constantinople, and interested himself deeply in the theological controversies. The first of them is—

"Whosoever says that Immanuel is very God, and not rather God with us, *i.e.* that He united Himself with our nature, which He took from the virgin Mary, and dwelt in it; and whosoever calls Mary the mother of the Logos of God, and not rather of Him who is Immanuel; and whosoever maintains that the Logos of God changed Himself into the flesh which He assumed, that He might manifest His divinity and be found in fashion as a man, let him be anathema."

The twelfth is—

"Whosoever, in speaking of the sufferings of Christ, ascribes them to the Logos, as well as to the flesh in which He appeared, and so does not distinguish the two natures, let him be anathema."

Hefele says that Nestorius, in his reply, fights against windmills, ascribing to the Bishop of Alexandria opinions which he never held;[2] but, if the entire controversy was not a logomachy—if theologians on both sides were not contending for shadows (Hefele would be the last to say that that was the case)—it is difficult to see how Nestorius could have met his adversary with propositions materially different from those in which he expressed himself; and it is admitted that

[1] Εἴ τις οὐχ ὁμολογεῖ τὸν τοῦ θεοῦ λόγον παθόντα σαρκὶ, καὶ ἐσταυρωμένον σαρκὶ, κ.τ. θανάτου γευσάμενον σαρκὶ, γεγονότα τε πρωτότοκον ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν καθὸ ζωὴ τέ ἐστι κ.τ. ζωοποιός, ὡς θεὸς, ἀνάθεμα ἔστω.

[2] [*Conciliengesch.* 2ter Band, s. 175.]

Cyril's ἕνωσις φυσική, though it is said in his defence that he was misunderstood, seemed to not a few of his contemporaries as grave an error as that which he combated, which lay in the rending of the one Christ into two. At all events, though we grant that the doctrine of the true and proper incarnation of Christ is not less important than that of His true and proper Divinity, and that the Church ultimately succeeded in formulating both correctly, the θεοτόκος as a shibboleth—and these anathematisms and the whole controversy turned round it—is no more comparable with the ὁμοούσιον than the champion of the one is with the champion of the other. I may mention that the θεοτόκος has been defended by other than Roman Catholic writers—by Liddon and Blunt for example.[1] The latter says even that that it is in accordance with the well-known *usus loquendi* in Scripture, whereby God is said to have purchased the Church with His own blood, and the Son of Man is said to be already in heaven while yet on earth. The latter part of this sentence is little to the purpose, while, as to the quotation in the former,[2] it is a most startling departure from the *usus loquendi;* and, even if the reading were not contested, which it is on good grounds and by high authorities, it gives no explicit sanction to the phrase "Mother of God." If that title be admissible, why should we be considered irreverent if we called David a progenitor of God (θεοπάτωρ), as a presbyter in Jerusalem actually did call the patriarch, or if we called James the brother of God (ἀδελφόθεος), as it is said he has sometimes been designated?

The cause which Cyril represented was destined to triumph, but it owed little to the anathematisms. Several eminent writers, including Theodoret of Cyrus, replied at length, and from this date the sympathies of John of Antioch, who was offended above all at the ἕνωσις φυσική, were with Nestorius. Before the arrival of the anathematisms, both parties demanded a general council, which Theodosius II. consented to convene. It was appointed to meet at Ephesus on the 7th of June (Pentecost), 431 A.D. Neither the Emperor Theodosius II. nor his colleague, Valentinian III., in whose name also the

[1] [Liddon, *Our Lord's Divinity* (Bampton Lectures), Lect. v., p. 257, 2nd ed.; Blunt's *Dictionary of Doctrine and Historical Theology*: Art. "Theotokos."]

[2] [Acts xx. 28.]

council was convoked, could attend in person, but an imperial commissioner was present in Candidian, captain of the body-guard, who was not authorised to take part in discussions on theological questions, but whose duty it was to prevent disorder and confusion—to see to it that the deliberations did not degenerate into such violent disputes as to hinder the careful investigation of truth, and to remove from the city any fanatical monks or turbulent laymen whose presence might render it difficult to keep the peace. Another duty assigned to the commissioner was to take care that no member of the council should return home before the conclusion of the proceedings.

The edict calling the assembly had been issued on November 19, 430. At that time it was the intention of Theodosius II. that the honour of presiding over it should be conferred on the most celebrated bishop of the age, the Bishop of Hippo. An imperial messenger was sent to summon him with a view to the bestowal of this distinction, but Augustine had died on the 22nd of August, and so—a remarkable instance of the slowness with which intelligence travelled in those days—the messenger could only bring back the news of his death.

But was not the convocation of an ecumenical council, and especially the invitation of Nestorius to attend it as a member, putting contempt on the decision of the Bishop of Rome and his synod, by which the heretic was sentenced to excommunication if he did not recant within ten days? Cyril thought it necessary to consult Cœlestine on this point. Was Nestorius to be permitted to sit on equal terms with other bishops, or ought not the sentence of removal to take effect, the space allowed for recantation having long elapsed? The Bishop of Rome replied, and, though his answer has been commended for the beautiful Christian sentiment it breathes, he was manifestly resiling from an unjustifiable and untenable position. Since God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance, the Bishop of Alexandria should adopt the course which he judged best for restoring the peace of the Church and gaining Nestorius for the truth.

Nestorius, with his sixteen bishops, was among the first that arrived in Ephesus. "He was attended," says Socrates, "by a number of armed men, as if he had been going to

a battle." Soon afterwards, a few days before Pentecost, Cyril arrived with fifty bishops, or about half of his suffragans. Juvenal of Jerusalem and Flavian of Thessalonica arrived next, but some days after Pentecost; while all were waiting for John of Antioch, who, with his bishops, was detained by causes that are by most Catholic writers represented as mere pretexts. The question raised by Nestorius was often agitated informally, and on one occasion, it is said, Nestorius manifested both his heresy and his obstinacy by declaring that it would never be possible for him to call a child of three or four months God. It is said by Roman Catholic writers that a message came from the Metropolitan of Antioch, requesting that the opening of the council should not be longer delayed on his account, from which it was concluded that he did not wish to be present at the condemnation of his former friend.[1]

It was resolved that the proceedings should be opened on June 22nd in the cathedral of Ephesus, which, remarkably enough, had been dedicated to the "Mother of God," and called by her name. Certainly the great virgin goddess worshipped of old in that city had no loftier title than that claimed for Mary. And never was she extolled in more extravagant phrases than those applied to Mary by one of these Constantinopolitan preachers when attacking the heresy of Nestorius—"The spotless treasure-house of virginity;" "The spiritual paradise of the second Adam;" "The workshop in which the two natures were annealed together;" "The bridal-chamber in which the Word wedded the flesh;" "The living bush of Nature which was unharmed by the fire of the Divine birth;" "The light cloud which bore Him who sat between the cherubim;" "The stainless fleece, bathed in the dews of heaven, with which the shepherd clothed his sheep;" "The handmaid and the mother, the virgin and heaven." It was significant and ominous that, at this important epoch, when the tendency to Mariolatry was manifesting itself so strongly, though not universally, the third ecumenical council was held in St. Mary's, at Ephesus; and, in fact, Cyril had no warmer supporter than Memnon, the Metropolitan of that city, who was present at the council with forty suffragans.

[1] I cannot say on what ancient authority the statement rests.

The day before the first sitting, several bishops were commissioned by Cyril and his friends to go to Nestorius to invite him to be present, that he might give an account of his doctrine. His answer was that he would take the matter into consideration. When a second deputation, sent by the council immediately after it was opened, came on the following day, it was found that his dwelling was surrounded with troops, which had been placed there by Candidian, who befriended Nestorius; and, as it was impossible to enter, the messengers were obliged to content themselves with the answer which Nestorius sent them: he would appear, he said, as soon as all the bishops were assembled. A third deputation had nothing further to report, except that they had been treated with contempt and rudeness by the soldiers who kept watch.

A noticeable feature of this council—a new feature in the history of councils—is that it was attended, though not at its beginning, by papal (if that word may be used) legates. These were two bishops and a priest—Arcadius, Projectus, and Philippus. Their instructions were not to mix in the discussions, but to sit as judges on the views that might be propounded, and to give Cyril their support in carrying out the decision at which Cœlestine doubted not the assembled bishops would arrive.

To that decision they soon came. The council, opened against the wish, and notwithstanding the protest of Candidian, proceeded under the presidency of Cyril—the pope's representative, he is sometimes called—to consider the charges against Nestorius. Various documents were read, including the anathematisms and counter-anathematisms, and the Nicene Creed, which was supposed to throw light on the question. But, especially as the Church had not yet fully laid down any doctrine on the constitution of Christ's Person, one could wish for evidence that the Holy Scriptures had been taken down from that throne to which they had been elevated, as in preceding ecumenical councils. I see no evidence that even that solitary passage in the Acts, in which, if we have the true reading, there is as bold a transfer of predicates as in the *θεοτόκος*, was appealed to. The sentence was given, not on scriptural, but on patristic proof. Quotations were made from Felix I. and Julius I. of Rome, Petrus, Athanasius, Theophilus of Alex-

andria, Ambrose, Basil, the Gregories, and others. Nay, even before these authorities were adduced, the members of council are said to have cried out unanimously, on hearing the counter-anathematisms: "Whosoever does not anathematise Nestorius, let himself be anathema! We all anathematise Nestorius, and his followers, and his ungodly faith, and his ungodly doctrine!"

The first sitting lasted till far in the night, and, at its close, the formal sentence of deposition was pronounced in these words: "The Lord Jesus, who is blasphemed by Nestorius, determines through this holy council that he be excluded from the episcopal office and from all sacerdotal fellowship."[1]

The sentence was signed by all the bishops present, who numbered a hundred and ninety-eight. All day long the excited population of Ephesus, concerned for the glory of Christ and of the Virgin, had waited for the decision; and, when it became known, they broke forth into universal rejoicing. The bishops, and above all Cyril, were conducted to their houses with torches and censers, and in many parts the city was illuminated. Next day Nestorius received an official letter, in which he was told, in the address, that he was a new Judas, and, in the text, that he had been deposed on account of his impious doctrine and his disobedience to the canons. The sentence—though this was superfluous—was placarded on the walls and cried through the streets till Candidian interfered, not so much because he was offended at the mode of publication as because, like Nestorius himself, he did not consider the council to be ecumenical, and therefore did not regard its decision as valid. He wrote to this effect to the Emperor.

Once again we have anathematisms and counter-anathematisms, but on a vaster scale. John of Antioch, with forty-two bishops, arrived on June 26th, and, holding a "conciliabulum," as it was called, under the protection of Candidian and his troops, deposed, in language as solemn as had been employed in the larger assembly, Cyril and Memnon, and required all the bishops who had voted with them to abjure and anathematise their heretical propositions. The mutual abuse and the intrigues and violence that followed show anything but

[1] παντὸς συλλόγου ἱερατικοῦ.

the spirit of Him whose mysterious Person was in question. Never could it be said with more justice, except with regard to one or two subsequent synods, that Christ was wounded in the house of His friends. There may be comfort in the remark often made—that "the true genius of Christianity is far elevated above its unworthy organs, and overrules even the worst human passions for the cause of truth and righteousness;" but it is impossible to conceal from ourselves, and it is saddening to remember, that this is precisely the sort of consolation we need when we see the Church torn and bleeding under the hands of its most ruthless persecutors.

Both parties, unscrupulous as to the means, did their best to gain the Emperor, and, in the first instance, both parties succeeded. Theodosius II. confirmed the deposition of all three,—Nestorius, Cyril, and Memnon,—and they were for a time placed under arrest, Cyril, however, continued to work upon the court by his monks and his money, and when, after seven sessions, the ecumenical council was dissolved in October, he and Memnon were set free and permitted to resume their episcopal functions. In the same month, a successor was appointed to Nestorius, who at his own request was allowed to return to his former cloister in the neighbourhood of Antioch, where for some years he was left in peace. In 433 it came about that Cyril and John of Antioch were reconciled, both signing a confession with which Cyril declared himself satisfied, though it did not perfectly accord with his dogmatic view. "We confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, is perfect God and perfect man, of a reasonable soul and body subsisting, as to His Godhead begotten of the Father before all time, but as to His manhood begotten of the virgin Mary in the end of the days for us and our salvation; of the same essence with the Father as to His Godhead, and of the same substance with us as to His manhood; for two natures are united with each other. Therefore we confess one Christ, one Lord, one Son. By reason of this union, which yet is without confusion (ἀσύγχυτος), we also confess that the Holy Virgin is mother of God, because God the Logos was made flesh and man, and united with Himself the temple even from the conception; which temple he took from the Virgin. But concerning the

words of the gospel and epistles respecting Christ, we know that theologians apply some that refer to the one person to the two natures in common, but separate others as referring to the two natures, and assign the expressions that become God to the Godhead of Christ, but the expressions of humiliation to His manhood."

There was nothing to prevent Nestorius himself from signing such a creed, except, perhaps, the circumstance that the θεοτόκος was too freely conceded; but John, if he did not sacrifice his convictions, sacrificed his friend—to the peace and unity of the Church, it is said—in reality, to his own comfort and reputation; and Nestorius, abandoned and betrayed by the man he had trusted most, was driven from Antioch, wandered about in Arabia and Egypt, and at last ended an upright life so utterly forsaken and friendless that no one could tell exactly when or where he died.[1] During his banishment, he wrote his own life under the title of *Tragœdia*. The rain, according to a legend mentioned by Schaff, has never nourished his grave, which is supposed to be in Upper Egypt; but the Jacobites, from year to year, throw stones at it. His doctrine, however, had still adherents. Some of the bishops in the diocese of Antioch highly disapproved of the sacrifice their Metropolitan had made to his prudence, and, for a time, renounced communion with him. Persecution, however, soon produced submission throughout the Empire except in the school of Edessa, where, though the long discussed Theodore of Mopsuestia had been anathematised by Bishop Babulas, his writings were translated into Syriac by Ibas, the immediate successor of Babulas. The school was broken up in 489, but its scattered members took refuge among the Persians, who had formerly received Barsumas, the fellow-labourer of Ibas, with honour, and had made him Bishop of Nisibis. Soon after, a patriarchate was established at Ktesiphon. Hence arose the Nestorian Church, the members of which are called Chaldæan Christians (from Chaldee = Syriac), or, as in India, to which they spread, the Thomas Christians, perhaps from one of their first teachers, perhaps from the apostle.[2]

[1] The date of his death is about 440.

[2] "Asseman gives a catalogue of 198 writers, with more in an appendix, who

Worship of the Virgin.

"And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden; for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." You cannot read the chapter in which these words occur without feeling the propriety of the phrase "The Blessed Virgin." She was blessed, as Elizabeth declared, in her faith, and in the sure hope that what the Lord had promised He would perform; blessed, as she herself declared, because He that is mighty had "done great things" for her. She felt herself to be blessed, and she foresaw that all succeeding ages would call her blessed. After the angel's prediction of the everlasting dominion of the Son who should be born, we need not wonder that, amid the humble and touching expressions of her joy at the sacred and sublime destiny to which she was set apart, she should have uttered the words "from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed"; which, however, far from anticipating and arrogating Divine honours, are scarcely stronger than Leah's exclamation at the birth of her son Asher. But, indeed, among all women she is blessed; and had she not poured forth the Magnificat—had she received in silence both the annunciation of the angel and the salutation of Elizabeth—had the evangelist recorded no word uttered by her, as he has recorded none uttered by her husband Joseph—it would well become us to honour greatly her whom the Father honoured, bestowing upon her marvellously of His grace while He made her the mysterious channel of His unspeakable gift to men. Whether or not you call her the "New Eve"—although that is a designation which Protestants as well as Catholics have employed—the title "Mother of Jesus" surrounds her with a celestial radiance, which is reflected on the race and, above all, on her own sex. Some writers, comparing small things with great, remind us of the statue which was erected to Cornelia during her lifetime, and which bore this inscription and nothing more:

are called Syrian Nestorian writers: 'but the New Testament is one book reckoned, and Clemens Romanus one author.'"—Blunt [*Dict. of Sects, Heresies, and Schools of Thought:* Art. "Nestorians"].

"The Mother of the Gracchi"; and so it is said that the Greeks, at a time when the homage rendered to the blessed Virgin had hardly degenerated into idolatry, put no crown of precious metal or of precious stones on her images, but simply wrote upon the forehead one word in letters of gold —*θεοτόκος*—the mother of Him who was God. In this word we may see not a little that is objectionable; the Romanist regards it as a vast Divine poem containing all the glories he reveres in Mary—even as the twenty-four books of the Iliad were once written on papyrus so fine that the whole could be put in a nutshell. In point of fact, this word, formally adopted and sanctioned by the Council of Ephesus in 431, became and was for a while a shibboleth, and all the new prerogatives and glories claimed for Mary were supported in great measure by reasonings based on it. But, while you protest against the reasonings and their fearful consequences, you will not deny Mary honour as the virgin mother—the mother of Him who was Son of God while He was son of man. Luther himself, in his Commentary on the Magnificat, declares, speaking of her as the mother of Jesus, that no one could publish in her praise anything more magnificent, had he as many tongues as there are blades of grass on the earth, stars in the sky, grains of sand by the sea-shore. I might quote also from Calvin and others of the old reformers, who, like Luther, speak of both the maternity and the character of Mary in terms that would appear excessively strong to some of us. In short, they believed that the honour put upon Mary was beyond speech, and that the grace of God dwelt richly in her, disposing her to magnify, as we should do, the Lord, and Him alone. Without adding quotations to that from Luther himself, I simply mention the fact to guard against the erroneous opinion, not uncommon, that the first Protestants were specially disposed to degrade the life and character of the Virgin, and to vulgarise her to the level of our commonest humanity.

But whence shall we draw our notions of her life and character and true dignity? The gospel says little of her; and accordingly many writers set themselves to supply the defect, grouping around her all the traditions of the east and all the details of private manners as they presented themselves

in the daughters of Judæa at the time of our Lord, and, by the aid of these traditions and details, as well as Divine messages and miracles invented at pleasure, constructing a life of the Virgin full of outward marvels, corresponding with the honours which the Church of Rome has awarded her. Others again, as if they had been not only her contemporaries but her intimate companions, have dwelt rather on the history of her heart, her inner life, her joys and sorrows. But not a few intelligent Romanists are now ready to acknowledge that, however much they might admire the beauty of some of these biographies and the piety of their authors, they have felt some uneasiness after reading these supplements to the inspired narrative of the gospel. They are content with the simplicity and sobriety of the New Testament, and maintain that it has said enough to justify the ever-growing adoration which is paid to the mother of Jesus by her votaries.

Can it then be said of the worship of Mary, as of the worship of the man Christ Jesus, or of the observance of the sacraments, that the gospel is itself the living rock in which its first historic ring is set and sealed? This some have attempted to show, contending that they who refuse to Mary any title or honour which has been decreed to her from the Council of Ephesus in 431, when she was solemnly recognised to be the mother of God, till the 8th of December, 1854, when the dogma of the Immaculate Conception was declared to be an article of the true faith—that they who withhold any such title, or reject any such dogmas, must give up the Bible as they have already given up tradition. Here, then, is a formal attempt to solve the problem, which had formerly been neglected, of the obscurity of Mary in the gospel, and to overcome what is thought to be the most widespread and specious prejudice against the adoration which is rendered her. Let me call your attention shortly to this subject, not only because a new character has thus been given to the controversy, and because it is in itself one of considerable interest, but because from the place which Mary holds in the gospel narrative some Protestants have drawn unjust and unwarrantable conclusions, fitted to lessen the honour and regard which are certainly due to her who was the channel of Heaven's greatest gift—who was the handmaid of the Lord,

and blessed among women. On the other hand, I need hardly say that no solution of the problem, in whatever light it may set Mary's character, and her Son's treatment of her, will justify the extravagant and monstrous idolatry of which she has been the object.

In the beginning of the gospel, then, the figure of Mary is conspicuous, but the joyous light in which she is seen, like that which shone round the shepherds of Bethlehem, soon disappears. From the time that Jesus begins to act and to teach,—when He utters the oracles of His wisdom, when He performs the prodigies of His power, when He diffuses the marvels of His mercy, when He associates with Himself the apostles, when He makes disciples and friends of the vilest sinners,—she whom we might have expected Him to honour most highly when He makes His communications familiar or glorious, is cast into the shade, and reappears two or three times only to be more deeply effaced. Jesus has words of high praise for John the Baptist, for the centurion of Capernaum, for the woman of Canaan, for Mary of Bethany, and for Peter also, whom He sometimes rebuked; He sits down to converse with the Samaritan woman; He becomes the defender of the adulterous woman; but His first recorded words to His mother after He begins His ministry are those which, explain away their severity as you will, and pronounce them in what tone you will, can never be brought to sound gentle and gracious. It is not concealed that she followed her Son, but it is made known as if to make us feel that she was not remarked. She is one of the multitude, and when from the multitude a voice rises to proclaim her more than the daughters of earth, Jesus seems to rob her of all special honour and hastens to speak of the blessedness which is common to all who hear the word of God and keep it. Again, when any high privilege is to be bestowed, we hear nothing of Mary. She is not with her Son on that holy mount when He is revealed so gloriously, and there is no mention of her—but her absence on these occasions is less wonderful, as no women were present —in the upper chamber, where He conversed so tenderly, interceded so mightily, and blessed the symbols of that flesh and blood which He had taken from her. At Calvary she reappears, but it is to be no partaker of her Son's shame and

suffering; and if she hears words of love, yet they are the heart-rending words which give her to another—"Woman, behold thy son!" But the earthly history of Jesus is not finished with His redeeming work. His body cannot be holden of death. To whom, then, will the risen Saviour first manifest Himself? Who will receive His last blessing? Whose eye will be the last to lose Him when the cloud bears Him into heaven? Will not Mary of Nazareth be preferred to Mary of Magdala? And will she not be constantly found near her Son till He ascends to His glory? There is not the slightest mention of her in those touching scenes of the forty days. We might have supposed that she was no more—that the sword which had pierced her soul had destroyed her—but for a verse in the Acts of the Apostles, where she is mentioned among the apostles and holy women assembled in the upper chamber at Jerusalem, and where she is mentioned last.

Now, one thing at least is obvious: that such a history is not after the manner of men. It is not thus that men invent; as, indeed, appears but too plainly from the apocryphal gospels. I remark, first, with regard to it, that it in nowise derogates from her character as a godly woman plenteously endued with the grace of heaven, but, on the contrary, is calculated to exalt her in our esteem. She was, we know, the subject of Divine grace when the angel announced the birth of her Son; and, even if we had no subsequent intimation in Scripture that she was a devout, humble, meditative woman, it would not be rash to conclude that, after sustaining during thirty years a relation so close and tender with the glorious Redeemer, she must have reached an eminent degree of faith and sanctity, for which, as well as for her maternity, and more than for her maternity, she is to be pronounced blessed. Now, this conclusion is quite in accordance with and confirmed by her comparative effacement—the comparative distance at which she is held during our Lord's public life. He Himself has again and again declared the grand object of His mission: "The Son of Man is come to seek and save that which was lost;" "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel"; and how many of His most touching parables present Him in this merciful and consoling character! And as we hear Him speaking, so also we see Him acting. We find Him sur-

rounding Himself with publicans and sinners, and speaking graciously to infamous but penitent women; and again, in His dealings with the narrower circle of His friends, we find Him taking the three earthly witnesses to the Mount of Transfiguration, where they saw His glory and heard the voices of the three that bore witness from heaven—Moses, and Elias, and the Eternal Father Himself. And last of all,—to say nothing of the upper chamber where the Supper was instituted, but to speak of the history after the resurrection, in which women have the foremost place round the luminous figure of the Lord,—we find Him showing Himself to those who were sincere and attached indeed, but still *slow of heart* to believe that He should rise from the dead. The evidence for us is the more complete that all the manifestations we read of were vouchsafed to those whose incredulity was to be overcome. But it is most noteworthy that He who addressed the Magdalene and bade the women tell the disciples and Peter that He was risen, nowhere says a word of Mary. No voice—at least we read of none—bade her behold her Son, the Son of her womb, whom she had seen expire on the cross. Let us not suppose that the heart of Him who invited Thomas to thrust his hand into the wounded side was closed against her who had borne Him and had fled with Him into Egypt. Rather may we suppose that now, after His death, as before His birth, she was blessed in her faith. To her who had laid up so much in her heart it was not a thing incredible that her Son should rise and enter into His glory, and it may be that Jesus thought of her first of all when He said: "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed."

If, then, Jesus, during His public life, seems to treat Mary with comparative neglect, we may admit that it is as the physician who seeks objects more needful of his power and skill, or as the master of the house who overlooks those of his own household in his concern for his guests; but this by no means warrants the conclusion that Christ, as He manifested His own glory, manifested proportionally the glory of the virgin mother—that "each new wave of the rising sea of Divinity, which was to purify the universe, raised her up and bore her up as an ark of sanctity on the merciful deluge." For the notices of Mary in the gospel history emphatically

teach us that she had no authority whatever over her Son in the exercise of His divine power. Almost every time He speaks to her or of her, He asserts His independence as the Son of God, and more than once He declares earnestly, and in accents of Divine love which should touch us all, the unspeakable superiority of the relationship from which, indeed, Mary was by no means excluded, but which is after the Spirit and not after the flesh. You will recall the examples—the utterance of His boyhood: "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" the stronger language at Cana: "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" —not so harsh, certainly, as it sounds in our version, but still implying reproof—and again, when His relatives, and Mary among the rest, doubtless in her tender affection and motherly fears, would have restrained Him in the exercise of His ministry, you remember the language with which He answered the message that they desired to speak with Him: "Who is my mother, and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand towards his disciples and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, the same is my mother and sister and brother." Once more, and not long before the crucifixion, when a woman in the crowd exclaims, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee and the paps which thou hast sucked," He replied: "Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." In this last incident there is something peculiarly affecting. "All generations shall call me blessed," the Virgin had said in her grateful joy, and now when, for the first time probably, a solitary voice is raised to call her blessed, her Son and Lord diverts all thoughts to a far higher blessedness than that which was peculiarly hers—the blessedness which others also may enjoy in common with faithful Mary. These utterances plainly came from Him who knew man's heart and his proneness to idolatry. The marvel is not their seeming severity or coldness, but that, in spite of them, the worship of Mary should have reached such enormous dominion that she should be represented as the Ark of the Lord's strength which has arisen with Him into His rest; a universal parent bending over the earth like a mother over the sick-bed of her child; the Queen of Heaven, whose prayers

God hears as if they were *commands;* the Mother of Mercy, to whom we may appeal from the judgment of God, and to whom it is safer to pray than to Christ; the Holy Virgin, as the late Pope declared, on whom our salvation is grounded, so that, if there is any spiritual faith or health for us, we receive it solely and wholly from her. "It may be doubted," says an Italian bishop, "whether Christ did more for the redemption of the world with His blood, or Mary with her tears." Surely it was not without reason—we can only lament that in the case of so many it should have been without effect—that He who knew what was in man, and knew the end from the beginning, solemnly and utterly repudiated the authority of His mother when He acted in His Divine character.

But the notices of Mary, which, even if the Word of God contained no express prohibition of idolatry, are sufficient to condemn the adoration of Mary, commend her, nevertheless, to our honour and esteem. The admirable beauty of her character shines forth from the clouds through which she passed. It was because the Lord knew *her* heart as well as ours, that those words of apparent severity were uttered. He whose mercy was upon her knew what it was meet that she should bear, and what she was able to bear. In His love He tried and proved her even as it was best for her to be tried and proved. Among her characteristic graces, which appear in the earliest notices of her life, her earnestness, her energy, her faith, her piety, her habit of devout meditation—among these the grace of graces—lowliness—was not wanting. It was conspicuous. That appears in the Magnificat, but in the Magnificat also we learn that she was in no wise insensible to the marvellous honour of giving birth to Him who should be called the Son of the Highest, and whose dominion should be without end. Now, suppose that a unique and incomparable distinction were unexpectedly conferred on any of you, possibly in the first moments you would be overwhelmed by a sense of your unworthiness and nothingness; but is there not the utmost danger that you would soon cease to be humble, and would become proud of that which at first you had recognised and received as a free gift? Such is human nature: a great and unlooked-for blessing usually

requires time before it works pride. And if ever, as time advanced, any mother was under temptation, it was assuredly the highly favoured Mary—she who was "blessed among women." And therefore did the Lord, as soon as He began to manifest His glory, try her in that very thing in which it was most fit that she should be tried—her motherly relation to Himself; and the humility of Mary, like the faith of the woman of Canaan, endured the proof, and came forth the purer and the deeper for those words of seeming harshness. She was as a violet growing in lowliness and obscurity by the side of Him who was Himself as the lily of the valley. Nothing is more striking than the reverence and faith with which she listened to His emphatic word at Cana, when there seemed to be so little to call for an assertion of His Divine independence. Her kind, womanly feelings toward her host, and the faith in her Son, which prompted her to utter the words, "They have no wine," are less admirable than the calm, submissive devotion and the *sustained* faith with which she addressed the servants after her Lord's reply; and never again, with one exception, which is slight if not altogether seeming, does she attempt to bring forward her relationship, far less to usurp authority. Not to dwell again on the subsequent incidents, are we not by all of them taught most impressively, and with a wisdom wholly Divine, that the one thing needful—the one thing above all others—is not any outward connection with Christ, no matter how close, but that spiritual union which is rooted in faith and nourished in love and obedience. In that union, unspeakably more than in her maternity, Mary herself was blessed. She has her glory, as there is a glory of the sun, a glory of the moon, a glory of the stars, but, like them, she is still a creature, and we cannot worship her any more than we can worship with that foul and fatal idolatry which once found objects throughout the whole creation.

I have no wish to speak at present of the absurdities and fables to which the idolatrous worship of Mary has led, and by which again it has been maintained and extended—of the removal of her body from earth to heaven, and of her house from Nazareth; of images winking and walking; of pictures leaping from their frames, and statues from their base. There are points vastly more interesting, which I do not even

mention. But I cannot conclude without indicating what appear to be the chief causes that have led to the idolatry of Mary—a growing idolatry, which was hardly known before the fifth century, and which culminated in the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. "On the 8th of December 1854," says a Catholic professor, "a triumph was achieved at which hell trembled and heretics gnashed their teeth, but which caused joy among the faithful, and caused heaven itself to break forth into jubilee, saints and angels singing a new song to their everlasting queen." What are the causes that have tended to produce this prodigious extravagance?

1. There is the natural tendency to form and worship the ideal woman—one in whom all the singular graces of her sex meet, and meet in perfection. The influence of this cause is obvious and potent. Mr. Robertson of Brighton dwells on it as if it were the sole cause, and thinks it would be sufficient to counteract the idolatrous worship of Mary if her votaries were brought to see that in the Divine Person of Christ there is neither male nor female—that in His character, more than in any woman, were revealed meekness and tenderness and gentleness, purity and fortitude, as well as those qualities of soul which are regarded as more peculiarly masculine. The tendency to worship an ideal of the female graces is not, however, the sole cause to be mentioned. There are others which have exerted a great and hardly a subordinate influence.

2. The love of what seemed system and symmetry in theology, which is manifested particularly in an inordinate craving for perfect and complete antithesis. This craving frequently betrays orators into mischievous exaggerations, but it has been attended with effects vastly more disastrous in the dogmatist, particularly toward the Middle Age and during the Middle Age—that age of lead which many extol as the golden age of theology. Then, from a love of system as much as from a love of Mary, began men laboriously to show that everything in the history of the fall must have its counterpart in the history of the reparation. Here is a new Adam: there must also be a new Eve. The new Eve yields to the Angel of Light, and consents to bring life into the world and all our bliss; so that, if we are saved in Christ, we are saved by Mary, just as, when we sinned in Adam, it was nevertheless

by Eve that sin entered into the world. So they reasoned; and the result, of course, was to associate Mary and Jesus as closely and gloriously in the reparation as Adam and Eve were intimately and shamefully united in the fall. This, though the chief, is but one illustration, for the same cause operated in other ways to the same end.

3. Lastly, I notice the natural repugnance to an Intercessor who, while He delighteth in mercy, is yet appointed to execute judgment also. He is the Lamb of God, but we read of His wrath. His tender invitations come from a heart of infinite love, but we cannot forget His threatenings. His salvation is free and glorious, but it is only those who turn away from their iniquities, and whose faith worketh love, that receive it. Alas! have not most of us at some moment wished for a Divinity all mercy—one who will hear the suppliant whether he be truly penitent or not—whether he regard iniquity in his heart or not? Need we wonder that in pictures after men's hearts the throne of Mary is placed above the throne of her Son? While she is human, and holy as her Son, vengeance belongeth not to her any more than to us who are upon the earth.

CHAPTER LII.

DOCTRINE OF THE PERSON OF CHRIST (*continued*).

The Eutychian Heresy.

It was possible for those who held that two natures, the Divine and the human, were united in Christ, to run into two opposite extremes, either representing the union as being of so free and loose a kind that it would appear to be a connection between two distinct subjects of persons, or on the other hand, so emphasising the unity of the person as to make it incompatible with the distinction of the natures. Though Nestorius was condemned and θεοτόκος approved, the antagonism was in reality only covered by that symbol which was the result of the deliberations at Ephesus, and which Cyril of Alexandria and John of Antioch both signed. The war between the Alexandrian and the Antiochian school continued to rage, and on the side that had asserted itself successfully against Nestorius there arose a new heresy. That second extreme I have indicated was reached by some who too zealously combated the opposite error of the unhappy patriarch who had been anathematised at Ephesus and had died miserably in exile, and in their one-sidedness they furnished an illustration, and not a solitary one, of the truth that orthodoxy, like ambition, may overleap itself and fall on the other side.

The presbyter Eutyches, for more than thirty years archimandrite of a cloister at Constantinople, an old man of threescore and ten, who stood in an extraordinary odour of sanctity, who had never been known to leave his retreat, but who received many visitors and conversed with them on the mysteries of religion, and, above all, on the mystery of the incarnation, gave offence by the length to which he carried his Egyptian Christology to not a few who were as decidedly opposed to Nestorianism as himself, and particularly to Euse-

bius, Bishop of Dorylæum. This bishop, who visited Eutyches frequently, endeavoured to bring him back from his perilous extravagance, as he deemed it, by friendly counsel, but Eutyches who appears to have been not only honest in his convictions, but sufficiently conscious of the influence and authority he enjoyed in the capital, was deaf to his monitions. Eusebius brought before a *σύνοδος ἐνδημοῦσα* (a synod composed of such bishops as happened to be in residence at the time) a formal complaint against Eutyches, as a man who held blasphemous doctrine concerning the humanity of Christ, and reproduced the heresy of Apollinarius and his followers. Flavian, the patriarch, who presided, partly from the mildness of his disposition, and partly because he was well aware that Eutyches had powerful friends at court, was not disposed to insist on his appearing personally; but Eusebius and the members of synod generally would not receive his confessions and explanations in writing, or by the mouths of representatives, and Eutyches, in the end, presented himself, judging it safe, however, to come surrounded by soldiers and monks.

Into the particulars of his examination and his defence it is not necessary to go. Notwithstanding numerous attempts to shake him, he stedfastly adhered to his doctrine that, after the Logos was made flesh, the distinction of the natures ceased. This he believed to be the view of the fathers, and he maintained it to be the teaching of the Word of God. It is not true, however, that he insolently opposed the authority of Holy Scripture to the declarations of the fathers, and still further from the truth is it to say that this was the principal ground of the sentence that was pronounced against him. He did, however, say that, if the testimony of the fathers appeared sometimes doubtful, he would still make his appeal to the sacred books. His doctrine—at least that which is essential to his doctrine—is thus stated in his own words: "I confess that our Lord, as to the union, was born of two natures; but I confess that, after the union, there was one nature."[1] He hesitatingly and reluctantly acknowledged the consubstantiality of Christ with man: He had a human body, but it was not the body of a man. According to this

[1] ὁμολογῶ ἐκ δύο φύσεων γεγεννῆσθαι τὸν Κύριον ἡμῶν πρὸ τῆς ἑνώσεως· μετὰ δὲ τὴν ἕνωσιν μίαν φύσιν ὁμολογῶ.

view, He was "of two natures" (ἐκ δύο φύσεων), but not "in two natures" (ἐν δύο φύσεσι). The human nature is absorbed in the Divine as a drop is lost in the sea, a figure ascribed to Eutyches, though it had been used by men who were not charged with heresy.

"Lamenting the obstinacy and perversity of Eutyches"—so runs the decision—"we, for the sake of Christ whom he has reviled, have resolved that he be removed from the priestly office, excluded from the communion of the Church, and deprived of his rank as archimandrite. And let all men know that those who henceforth hold converse with him render themselves liable to the punishment of excommunication." This sentence (448) was signed by about thirty bishops, with the formula ὅρισας ὑπέγραψα (*judicans subscripsi*), other signatures adding simply ὑπέγραψα.

The decision of the σύνοδος ἐνδημοῦσα would have reduced the aged archimandrite to a worse condition than that of an ἐρανιστής ["beggar"], a title which an opponent had already applied to him intellectually, because his false doctrine had been "begged" from heretics of former times.[1] But, in fact, the condemnation of Eutyches, instead of working his ruin, led to a violent reaction in favour of him and of the party he represented so mighty as to lead to a great, though momentary victory. Eutyches enjoyed favour at court, and he looked for the assistance of Leo, the powerful Bishop of Rome; but, above all, he could count on Dioscurus, the successor of Cyril, and a man still more ambitious, unscrupulous, passionate, and violent—a man who did as much as Theophilus himself to bring dishonour on the patriarchal throne which once Athanasius had adorned.

Theodosius II., gained by his minister Chrysaphius, who was friendly to Eutyches, and, at the same time, the enemy of Flavian, summoned a new synod to meet at Ephesus in the following year (449), in order, as it was expressed, that the Nestorian heresy might be destroyed to its last devilish root. On Dioscurus, who, along with Chrysaphius, had urged the Emperor to call the assembly, was conferred the distinction of

[1] [The opponent was Theodoret, who had all along supported the theology of Antioch, and whose three Dialogues, under the name of Ἐρανιστής, had shortly before appeared.]

president. At the same time, he was entrusted with surprisingly extensive powers, which would have been dangerous even if he had not been a man of imperious and stormy nature. Bishops who belonged to, or strongly sympathised with the Antiochian school, were excluded. Flavian and the others who had taken part in the *σύνοδος ἐνδημοῦσα* were summoned, not as members, but as accused persons who had to answer for themselves and hear the decision of the council in their case. Two imperial commissioners were sent with express instructions to take into immediate and sure custody any man who excited disturbance to the prejudice of the faith. The council met surrounded by the military, who had brought with them chains as well as weapons. Fanatical monks and parabolani, armed with cudgels (persons whose office it was to minister to the faith), were also in attendance to give their support. The threats of the president, sometimes passing into actual violence, and the wild exclamations of his savage majority, completed the terrorism, which was so great that hardly any man who held the doctrine of the two natures after the incarnation ventured to open his lips. When, at one of the sederunts, the questions which Eusebius of Dorylæum had put to Eutyches were read over, the indignation of the court gave itself vent in the words: "Burn Eusebius! Anathema to the man who speaks of two natures in the Word made flesh! Let him be cut in sunder who thus divides what has been joined together!" As soon as the president could make himself audible above the anathematising voices, he cried out: "Let him who cannot call loud enough hold up his hand in token of his concurrence." The synod refused the request which Leo made by his legates —that his *Epistola Dogmatica ad Flavianum*, which afterwards became famous, and was formally approved at the Council of Chalcedon, should be read. According to Leo himself,[1] his legates had not suffered themselves to be intimidated, and had even protested at Ephesus against the heterodox declaration of the synod, not only because they were Nestorian, but because everything was decided by the violence and rage of a single man.

The tumultuary proceedings resulted in the solemn appro-

[1] Letter 45, quoted by Hefele [*Conciliengesch*, 2ter Bd., s. 382].

bation of the confession which Eutyches had submitted to the *σύνοδος ἐνδημοῦσα* of Constantinople, and which he appeared at Ephesus to defend in person. On the other hand, the bishops Flavian, Eusebius of Dorylæum, and Domnus of Antioch, were deposed and excommunicated. According to more than one ancient authority, though it must be admitted there are accounts that conflict with their testimony, Dioscurus was not content with merely pronouncing on Flavian, but brutally assaulted him, casting him to the ground and treading him under foot, so that he died three days afterwards. Flavian, at any rate, appears to have suffered from barbarous hands, and it is certain that he survived his sentence only a few days. He had appealed to a new council, and, according to pretty satisfactory evidence, his appeal had been lodged in the hands of one of Leo's legates. It was this pope himself—and in this matter he was the true representative of Christendom—who branded the synod of Ephesus with the name by which it has ever since been known in history —*Latrocinium Ephesinum*: *σύνοδος λῃστρική*—the "Robber Synod."

We ought, we are sometimes told, never to forget the solidarity of the race. Those excesses by which the house named after the humble, loving woman who gave birth to the Saviour was profaned and turned into a den of thieves, are an outbreak, deplorable indeed, but perhaps due to special circumstances, of the *vitium naturæ*, with which we are all chargeable. It may be so; but the solidarity of the Church is, according to the Catholic as well as the Donatist idea, constituted by something very different from the common heritage of a sinful nature; and it is well to know that Leo refused to recognise that humiliating band as a synod of the Church, disowned it utterly, and besought the Emperor to do the same, that he might not be counted a partner of these men's sins, and bring dishonour on the gospel of Christ.

But the wild reaction in favour of Eutychianism had not yet spent itself in the east. Theodosius II. issued a decree forbidding the elevation of all Dyophysites, as they were called, to the episcopal office, or, if they already filled it, commanding that they be deposed. The writings of the

Dyophysites were to be burned, because he who read them was in danger of the curse pronounced at Ephesus against the man who added anything to, or took anything from, the words of the Nicene Creed. But even in the east it was impossible to enforce the decree fully, as in some of the provinces the bishops were almost unanimously opposed to Dioscurus and his party, and in Constantinople itself the majority of the people honoured the memory of Flavian and remained true to the doctrine he had represented. The dominant party, headed by Dioscurus, saw much to cause uneasiness. It was no strange thing for them to be seized with apprehension, for terrorism is often the result of fear; but now the desire for an ecumenical council that would be worthy of the name, and would undo the work of the scandalous assembly at Ephesus, was widely expressed, and probably Theodosius II., had he lived, would not have been able to resist long. He died in July 450 A.D., in consequence of a fall from his horse, and, as he did not leave male issue, the crown fell to his sister Pulcheria, who had been associated with him in the government as early as 415, when he was still a boy. But, as a woman had never reigned alone over the Roman Empire, either in the east or in the west, she gave her hand to Marcian, one of the most distinguished statesmen and generals of the time, giving him to understand that the alliance was formed only on public grounds. A new wind of doctrine, as happened so often in the east, blew around and from the throne. Another council was called for the restoration of the peace of the Church. As in the case of the ecumenical council of Ephesus, the citation was sent to the Metropolitan. It ran thus;—

"That which concerns the true faith and the orthodox religion must be preferred to all other things. For the favour of God to us insures also the prosperity of our empire. Inasmuch, now, as doubts have arisen concerning the true faith, as appears from the letters of Leo, the most holy archbishop of Rome, we have determined that a holy council be convened at Nicæa in Bithynia, in order that, by the consent of all, the truth may be tested, and the true faith dispassionately and more explicitly declared, that in time to come no doubts or divisions may have place concerning it. Therefore

let your holiness, with a convenient number of wise and orthodox bishops from among your suffragans, repair to Nicæa on the first of September ensuing. We ourselves also, unless hindered by wars, will attend in person the venerable synod."

In obedience to this summons, many bishops appeared at Nice; but, partly because there was great danger of fanatical outbreaks in that city, and partly because the Emperor desired to attend to his proper business in Constantinople as well as to ecclesiastical affairs, the council was removed to Chalcedon, opposite the capital, where it was opened in the Church of St. Euphemia on the 8th of October, 451, and sat till the beginning of the following month. Although the members were almost entirely from the east, the presence of the Vandals in Africa, and of the Goths and Franks in the western part of the Empire preventing the attendance of the Latins, yet about twice as many took their seats as had appeared at the first ecumenical council, and, at the same time, the influence of Rome was more powerfully felt than it had ever been at any similar assembly. Leo's *Epistola Dogmatica* was normative and authoritative, and in this very council, which assigned the Patriarch of Constantinople the rank next to that of the Bishop of Rome, and almost co-ordinate with it,[1] the chief of the papal legates, Paschasinus, filled the chair as ecclesiastical president. The Dyophysite party, favoured by the court, and supported by the influence of Leo, the first Roman bishop that made himself felt as a great personality, were so powerful that most of the Eutychians confessed their sin, some of them excusing themselves for the part they had taken in the "Robber Synod" by the unexampled violence that had been put upon them, and even alleging that they had been compelled to adhibit their names to blank paper. At length, after proceedings that were sometimes tumultuous, though not so scandalous as those at Ephesus, the council arrived at the definition of the Catholic doctrine in opposition both to Nestorius and to Eutyches. After laying down the consubstantiality of Christ with the Father and with us, and reaffirming the θεοτόκος, the symbol of Chalcedon proceeds:

[1] On grounds, however, which the latter and all his successors have vehemently repudiated.

"[We teach] that there is one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only-begotten from two natures, without confusion, without conversion, without division, without separation."[1] Many contend that "in two natures" (ἐν δύο φύσεσι) is the proper reading, and that it was afterwards changed by the Monophysites; but the thing meant is sufficiently explained by what follows:—

"The distinction of the natures being in no wise abolished by their union, but the peculiarity of each nature being maintained, and both concurring in one person and hypostasis." Flavian, who was now dead, was pronounced a martyr. Along with some other leading Eutychians, Dioscurus, who was charged with many sins besides heresy, was deposed and excommunicated. It was decreed that all who departed from the Symbolum Chalcedonense should be punished in like manner. The Emperor went further, and commanded that all Eutychians should be banished, and their writings burned. But, though many lauded Marcian as both priest and king, and many protested that the *Epistola Dogmatica* was manifestly inspired from heaven, and must settle the controversy for ever, a long period of trouble ensued before the victory, whatever price we may put upon it, was secured. It is often said, indeed, and said justly, that synods are not to be judged by the disturbances which their decisions may have occasioned, and it has been said particularly of Chalcedon that "the direction given to the stream is to be regarded, not the eddying of the waters at the time of building the breakwater." The question, however, arises: "What do those who seek guidance on the doctrine of the incarnation gain by following the stream thus directed?" It may be well to point out the opposing perilous rocks of Nestorians and Eutychians, and not difficult to guide a pen between them on a map, but is it possible for a toiling, struggling man to navigate between them? Moreover, it may be asked if it is a fable that the rocks move. Certain orthodox writers admit that the Monophysites had some reason for calling Leo himself the new Nestorius. But, after all, this is the excellence and the recommendation of the *Epistola Dogmatica*, and the Symbolum

[1] [ἐκδιδάσκομεν] . . . ἕνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν χριστὸν, υἱὸν, κύριον, μονογενῆ ἐκ δύο φύσεων ἀσυγχύτως, ἀτρέπτως, ἀδιαιρέτως, ἀχωρίστως.

Chalcedonense, that the perfect humanity of Christ was fully asserted; and if some of the phrases have a Eutychian sound, no one can say that the humanity is sacrificed to the Divinity any more than that the Divinity is sacrificed to the humanity. The question remains whether the co-existence of two perfect but impersonal natures, both having intelligence and will, be compatible with the idea of undivided self-consciousness.[1]

[1] [It is to be considered how far the pre-existent personality of the Logos who assumes the human nature lessens the difficulty.]

CHAPTER LIII.

DOCTRINE OF THE PERSON OF CHRIST (*continued*).

The Monophysite Heresy.

By the decisions of Chalcedon, the dispute as to the Person of Christ was for a period rather envenomed than appeased. The Symbolum, though we may admit that it was dictated by a sound practical spirit, and was true to the consciousness of the Western Church, had offered no solution of the radical difficulty which had been clearly stated by Apollinarius before the Nestorian and the Eutychian controversies broke out. The Monophysite party was still strong in the east, and, in consequence of the decision of Ephesus (431), and the persecution which followed, it had no longer its original counterpoise. The schools of Antioch and Edessa were destroyed, and the Nestorians had been driven beyond the bounds of the Empire to Persia and India. The imperial power could, indeed, do much to enforce the creed which had received œcumenical sanction; but the theology of the court was of an extremely fluctuating character. Accordingly, the Egyptian Christology, with its numerous adherents in all the provinces of the east, asserted itself anew under another name.

The father of Monophysitism, as distinguished from Eutychianism, of which, however, it is a modification, was, according to some, no other than the president of the robber synod —the infamous Dioscurus. He taught—this, at least, was the teaching of the Monophysites—that the union of the Divine and human natures in Christ did not result in the extinction or the absorption of the latter, but that the "one nature" constituted by the incarnation was partly human and partly Divine. At the time of his deposition by the Council of Chalcedon, Dioscurus exclaimed: "They are condemning

the fathers as well as me: I have passages from Athanasius and Cyril that forbid us to speak of two natures of the incarnate Son." His banishment by the Emperor in 452, and the election of a patriarch in his stead,[1] caused great riots in Alexandria, where, among his ardent partisans, one-sided and false reports of the proceedings at Chalcedon were industriously circulated.[2] The fathers, it was said, for example, had pronounced condemnation on the great Cyril, and had adopted the heresy of Nestorius. The fanatical populace, inflamed by such rumours, became so infuriated that they burned imperial soldiers in what had been the temple of Serapis. The orthodox patriarch, Proterius, who succeeded Dioscurus, maintained himself during four or five troubled years, which were tragically ended. His chief opponent was Timotheus Ælurus (αἴλουρος ["cat"]), so called, it is said, "because of his climbing up to the windows of the monks, and pretending that he was a messenger sent from heaven to bid them forsake the communion of Proterius, and to make himself patriarch in his stead." And, in fact, on the death of the Emperor Marcian, Timothy Ælurus had himself consecrated by two banished bishops, and shortly after, a rabble of monks and other partisans of the new patriarch followed Proterius to a baptistry during holy week, when the baptisms were going on, stabbed him, dragged his body through the streets, burned on the shore what remained of it, and threw the ashes into the sea (457). The murder was almost as foul and barbarous as that of Hypatia, which had been perpetrated less than half a century before.

Serious disturbances broke out also in Palestine, where a Monophysite monk, named Theodosius, supplanted the patriarch Juvenal, and consecrated bishops who, like himself, were determined to maintain the true faith, which Chalcedon had betrayed, and to root out the heresy that it had favoured.

A similar schism was headed at Antioch by Peter the Fuller (Peter Fullo).

The Monophysite party, triumphant in many parts of the east, regarded their opponents as a mere sect, and spoke of them disdainfully as "Chalcedonians," or "Melchites"

[1] Dioscurus died at Gangra in 454.

[2] So also were falsified translations of the *Epistola Dogmatica*.

("Royalists"). In the year 476, the usurper Basiliscus[1] endeavoured to strengthen his cause by favouring the Monophysites. He issued a circular letter, in which he declared his adherence to the three ecumenical councils of Nice, Constantinople, and Ephesus, but condemned the decisions of Chalcedon and the *Epistola Dogmatica* of Leo. About five hundred bishops, with the patriarchs of Alexandria, Jerusalem, and Antioch at their head, signed this document; but in the following year (477), the Monophysites were damped by the victory and restoration of Zeno, whom Basiliscus had expelled. Before many years had passed, however, Zeno, though, unlike Basiliscus, he accepted the decisions of all the ecumenical councils, thought it desirable to make some concession to the numerous and turbulent party that accepted the decisions of only the three first. In 482, he issued, on the advice of some of the high clergy, including the Patriarch of Constantinople, a "Henoticon"—a formula of concord—in which the expressions that had come into use during the controversy were entirely avoided, and the authority of the Nicæno-Constantinopolitan Creed was asserted in terms that seemed derogatory to the Symbolum Chalcedonense: "Whosoever thinks or has thought otherwise (than in that creed), whether at Chalcedon or at any other synod, let him be anathematised."

This legislation in matters of faith—you observe it was something more than an edict simply accepting or rejecting certain dogmas of the Church—was as futile as it was incompetent. In several notable instances, indeed, the attempts of the Cæsareopapy to effect reconciliation and union by prescribing or by proscribing theological formulæ have not only proved impotent, but been attended with most disastrous and tragical results. In the case before us, not only was the formula of concord rejected by most of the Catholics, but it sowed division among the Monophysites, of whom the dissatisfied, separating from their heads, Peter Fullo of Antioch and Acacius of Constantinople, formed a sect known by the ambiguous name *Acephali* (the "Headless"—compare Alogi). The Henoticon, in fact, instead of making two parties one, made them four. Violent distractions and

[1] Brother of Verina, the widow of Emperor Leo I.

tumults followed in the Oriental Church, and in 484, for the first time in history, an anathema passed between the west and the east. It was pronounced by Felix II. at a synod held at Rome under Acacius, and caused an interruption of Church communion between the west and the east that lasted for thirty-five years. The Emperor Anastasius (491–518), though he promised to maintain the Symbolum of Chalcedon, required subscription to the Henoticon from every newly appointed bishop, and, under the influence of keen and intriguing Monophysites, removed many bishops who sought the restoration of communion with Rome.

But there arose other differences than those occasioned by the measures of the court. New developments of the Monophysite doctrine caused new divisions. Thus, the addition made by Peter Fullo to the Trishagion of the Monophysite clause: "Thou who hast been crucified for us," led to great disorders at Constantinople when the monk Severus and others attempted to introduce it in the public services. Then ensued depositions, distractions, and at last rebellion, which ended in the Emperor's being obliged to conclude a peace in favour of the Symbolum Chalcedonense. Even a feast was appointed in the Greek Church in honour of the council, and many Monophysites were banished, while orthodox bishops were recalled. The formula, however, had not a few zealous defenders, and in the time of Justinian, it was, in an edict issued by that Emperor, publicly recognised as the doctrine of the Church. The formula obviously admits of such a construction that Diophysites might without difficulty accept it; but, as many, Baur among them,[1] have remarked, occurring where it does occur in the Trishagion, it seems to connect human suffering with the absolute Three-one God—a definition, as it were, belonging to the essence of God, yet involving that He is man, and, as man, subject to pain and death.

There arose another question, with regard to which we find two hostile Monophysite parties confronting each other—the Aphthartic Docetæ, or Julianists, so-called from Julianus, Bishop of Halicarnassus, and the Phthartolatræ or Severians, so-called from Severus of Antioch. As the names indicate,

[1] [*Die Chr. Kirche vom Anfang des 4ten bis zum Ende des 6ten Jahrhunderts*, s. 118.]

the former held the incorruptibility, the latter the corruptibility, of the body of Christ. To the view that the body of Christ was imperishable before the resurrection, the chief objection was that it was impossible to apply such a predicate to a body which had hungered and thirsted, and had been subjected to other sufferings. The Aphthartodocetæ did not deny the reality of the human conditions, on which their adversaries laid stress, but contended that in this case hunger, thirst, weariness, weakness, and the like, were not to be regarded as anything natural, but as something purely voluntary.[1] The Phthartolatræ, distinguishing between qualities and substance, and, in common with other Monophysites, denying that Christ had a human nature after the incarnation, yet ascribed to Him the natural qualities of man, and so the natural liability to pain and death.[2]

But the more advanced party of the Monophysites had not yet advanced far enough. Was not the synthesis of the Divine and the human in Christ essential and eternal? There again we have another subdivision of Monophysitism—the Aktistetæ and the Ktistolatræ, the former maintaining that there was nothing created in the Redeemer, and stigmatising their opponents as creature-worshippers. On the other hand, the Severians raised the question whether Christ had been omniscient during His earthly existence, or had not, as a partaker of our nature, been ignorant of some things. Hence arose the Agnoetæ, or Themistians, as the new party was called from their leader, Themistius, a deacon of Alexandria. And so we have the remarkable phenomenon of a sect of Monophysites holding a natural imperfection in Christ, which the Dyophysites would not admit.

But it is needless to dwell on, or even notice, all the multiplied ramifications of the original Alexandrine stem, as planted by Cyril or by Dioscurus. Some arrived at Sabellianism, some at Arianism, some at Tritheism, and some at last even at Pantheism. The Niobites, so-called from the Alexandrine sophist, Stephen Niobis or Niobus, maintained that no distinction between the human and the Divine was

[1] ἐξ οἰκονομίας.

[2] There were also the Gaianites and the Theodosians [these being the names of Alexandrian sections of the parties].

conceivable in Christ. Proceeding from this affirmation of the identity of the two natures in the Redeemer, a Monophysite abbot, it is recorded, reached a further conclusion, and inscribed on the walls of his cell the words: "All creatures are consubstantial with God."

These internal divisions had greatly weakened the Monophysites by the time that Justinian (527–565) came to reign. This sovereign, one of the greatest rulers in the history of the declining Empire, chiefly because, like Charlemagne and some others, he was wise enough to avail himself of the services of men illustrious in various departments, his name being surrounded with glory through the rapid victories and conquests of Belisarius and Narses and, still more, through the legislation that has been so influential on succeeding centuries, and of which the chief merit belongs to Tribonianus, was most devout in his habits and, at the same time, an energetic supporter of the cause of orthodoxy. It is said of him that "he used to spend whole nights in prayer and fasting, and in theological studies and discussions, and, in particular, that he regarded it as his special mission to reconcile heretics and to unite all parties of the Church." In his code, he ratified the four ecumenical councils, and, by measures partly severe and partly conciliatory, he endeavoured to procure for the decrees of Chalcedon universal recognition among the Churches of the east. But his intentions were partly frustrated, and his views were partly changed, by his artful wife, Theodora, who was favourable to the Monophysites and gradually reconciled his ear to their shibboleth, as it is sometimes called: "God was crucified for us." Justinian arranged a conference between five Catholic and six Monophysite bishops, at which the latter appealed to the testimonies of various writers, one of whom was Dionysius the Areopagite.[1] The conference had no result except that it prepared the way for the controversy which became famous as that of the "Three Chapters." In the same year, the formula, "God was crucified for us," though not exactly sanctioned as an addition to the Trishagion, was declared orthodox. By the same influence as had led to this victory, Anthimus, a Monophysite, was two years afterwards elevated to the patriarchal throne of Constantinople. But he

[1] This (533) is the first notice of Dionysius the Areopagite as an author.

was unmasked by the pope Agapetus, who happened to visit the capital, and the exposure of his heresy led to his deposition in 536, and a *σύνοδος ἐνδημοῦσα*, held in the same year under his successor Mennas, a friend of the pope's, condemned Monophysitism.

But another turn was now given to the controversy. The once violent but long dormant dispute concerning the tenets of Origen burst forth with new fury. Monastery after monastery was disturbed and divided by restless men who combined Monophysitism with distinctively Origenistic tenets, and defended both by the authority of the great Alexandrian. The attention of the Emperor was drawn to these distractions, and to the writings of the heresiarch that were said to have occasioned them. Seizing the too welcome opportunity of legislating in matters of faith, he wrote a treatise against the works of Origen, especially the *περὶ ἀρχῶν*, in the form of an edict addressed to Mennas, the Patriarch of Constantinople. In this edict the Patriarch was required to convene a synod for the purpose of anathematising Origen; and, though some protested that neither the Emperor nor any other man, or any body of men, had the right to sit in judgment on the dead, his will was carried into effect by an obscure synod which met in Constantinople and pronounced an ecclesiastical sentence of condemnation, which many feel themselves the more free to despise as it was never confirmed by the collective voice of the Church.

But the Origenist Theodosius Askidas, Bishop of Cæsarea, in Cappadocia, who had great influence with the Empress, found means to protect the monks whose disorders had provoked the Emperor, and who, notwithstanding the condemnation of their principles, became more violent than ever, and, not content with attacking the adherents of the Symbolum of Chalcedon, began to quarrel among themselves, particularly on the question whether the pre-existent human soul of Christ was the proper object of worship. Those who held that it was, were called Tetratheites (as believing in a fourth Divine person) by their opponents, the Isochristoi, who taught that all souls would finally become like Christ's.

But the Bishop of Cæsarea was not satisfied with protecting the Origenistic monks, which he did chiefly by intimidating

the Patriarch of Jerusalem, within whose bounds the most zealous of them lived. He took his revenge by turning the Emperor's attention in the opposite direction, and working upon him till he brought about the condemnation of some of the most distinguished representatives of the Antiochian School. He induced Justinian, who loved to dogmatise, and whose favourite project was the restoration of the Monophysites to the Catholic Church, to examine the opinions of Theodore of Mopsuestia, of Theodoret of Cyrus, of Ibas of Edessa, and to ascertain whether these men were not promoters of Nestorianism, and whether their condemnation would not propitiate the Monophysites, and so conduce to the accomplishment of his cherished design. This, in a word, was the plan presented to the sovereign: "Reconcile the living who are at war by condemning the dead whose writings are offensive to both parties." Askidas succeeded. The Emperor, in 544, issued an edict, known by the name of the "Three Chapters," condemning—(1) the person and writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia; (2) the writings of Theodoret, which were directed against Cyril, and in which that patriarch was accused of Apollinarianism and Manichæism; (3) a letter of Ibas of Edessa to the Persian bishop Maris, in which similar charges were brought against the Patriarch of Alexandria, and the *κοινωνία ἰδιωμάτων* was denied.

Schaff says that the controversy that ensued—that of the "Three Chapters"—has filled more volumes than it was worth lines. I bring it to an end. In 553 Justinian summoned the fifth ecumenical council, which met at Constantinople, and was attended by about a hundred and sixty bishops. The edict of the "Three Chapters" was confirmed; so, at the same time, was the previous imperial edict declaring the orthodoxy of the formula, "God was crucified for us," but not, let it be repeated, as part of the Trishagion.[1] The decision of the fifth ecumenical council was:—

"If any one confess not that our Lord Jesus Christ, crucified in the flesh, is very God and Lord of Glory, and one of the holy Trinity, let such an one be anathema."[2]

[1] Ἅγιος ὁ θεός, ἅγιος ἰσχυρός, ἅγιος ἀθάνατος, ὁ σταυρωθεὶς δι' ἡμᾶς, ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς.

[2] Εἴ τις οὐχ ὁμολογεῖ τὸν ἐσταυρωμένον σαρκὶ κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν εἶναι θεὸν ἀληθινὸν καὶ κύριον τῆς δόξης, καὶ ἕνα τῆς ἁγίας τριάδος, ὁ τοιοῦτος ἀνάθεμα ἔστω.

The most remarkable point in the history of the controversy of the "Three Chapters" is that Pope Vigilius appears, on satisfactory evidence, to have changed his mind four times. This contemptible pontiff causes much perplexity to Roman Catholic authorities. According to the account which is given of his elevation, the Empress played a most criminal game, and under the pretext that Silverius, who had been appointed to the see, had entered into a treacherous alliance with the Goths, procured his banishment to the island of Palmaria, where he died the following year, seemingly of starvation. In his stead, and while he was yet living, Vigilius was intruded after he had given to Theodora the promise that he would restore Anthimus, the deposed Patriarch of Constantinople, and protect the Monophysites in general. Now, notice how the honour of the infallible See is maintained by a writer who is generally fair:—

"When, upon the death of Silverius, Vigilius was lawfully chosen or silently recognised, he immediately recalled his former promise, and declared himself for the orthodox doctrine." I shall not enter on the particulars of his subsequent cowardly vacillation, but mention only that the fifth ecumenical council, which he did not attend, sending to it a letter, suspended him, but that, two years after, having given in his adherence, he was permitted to return to Rome and died (555) on the way. With such a case before us, it is requiring much of us to ask us to believe in the papal infallibility. Moreover, an occasional link of this sort excites doubt as to the sacredness and value of that continuity in the chain of succession from Peter of which so much is made, and which is held so essential a condition of the fulfilment of the great promise.

A word of explanation may here be given as to phraseology. By κεφάλαια (*capita*—"chapters") were very frequently understood propositions drawn up in the form of anathematisms, pronouncing or threatening excommunication. So the anathematisms pronounced by Cyril on Nestorius were often called his twelve κεφάλαια. This being the meaning of the term, we should naturally expect to find that one party would be represented as accepting or concurring with, and another party as rejecting or disapproving, the propositions. But

such is not the *usus loquendi*. We have κεφάλαια employed in a second sense, a sense derived from the first, and meaning, not the propositions themselves, but the persons and writings designated in them. In the particular case already stated, condemnation was passed on—(1) the person and writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia; (2) the writings of Theodoret against Cyril; and (3) the letter of Ibas to Maris. The persons of the two latter are not condemned, because they had been pronounced orthodox by the Council of Chalcedon, they having departed, or having been supposed to depart, from certain positions they had maintained. Take an illustration of the *usus loquendi*. Vigilius (547) wrote at Constantinople, from fear of the Emperor, a *judicatum*, as it was termed, in which he condemned the "Three Chapters." In 553 he wrote a *constitutum*, which was read to the ecumenical council, and which, while not accepting their teaching, disapproved of the condemnation of the chapters.

As we have seen, Vigilius, who had retracted his *judicatum*, retracted also his *constitutum*, and submitted to the council. His successor, Pelagius I., formally recognised its decisions as valid. But a schism continued between the Roman See and several of the western Churches, who were mortified by the cowardice of the popes and the partial victory of the Alexandrine Christology. Towards the end of the century, the schism was healed, and the fifth ecumenical council received general recognition through the influence of Gregory the Great.

Justinian's last effort to gain the Monophysites was a proclamation (564) in which the Aphthartodocetic doctrine—the doctrine of the incorruptibility of the body of Christ—was declared to be orthodox. But, while the Monophysites would be satisfied with nothing short of the rejection of the Symbolum Chalcedonense, the Catholics were irritated by every edict that seemed inconsistent with that Symbolum, and so all the seemingly conciliatory but despotic measures of the dogmatising Emperor were utterly abortive.

Justinian died in 565. In the same year an edict of toleration proceeded from his successor, Justin II.; but already the Monophysites were forming a distinct schismatical party, and possibly the peace of the Church was promoted

more effectually by their entire separation than it could have been by any number of legislative enactments, however tolerant and just. One of the most striking passages in Schaff is on the Monophysites after they entered on their distinct ecclesiastical life:—

"These Christological schismatics stand, as if enchanted, upon the same position which they assumed in the fifth century. The Nestorians reject the third ecumenical council, the Monophysites the fourth; the former hold the distinction of two natures in Christ, even to abstract separation; the latter the confusion of two natures in one, with a stubbornness which has defied centuries, and forbids their return to the bosom of the orthodox Greek Church. . . . The Monophysites are scattered upon the mountains and in the valleys and deserts of Syria, Armenia, Assyria, Egypt, and Abyssinia, and, like the orthodox Greeks of those countries, live mostly under Mohammedan, partly under Russian rule. They supported the Arabs and Turks in weakening and at last conquering the Byzantine empire, and thus furthered the ultimate victory of Islam. In return, they were variously favoured by the conquerors, and upheld in their separation from the Greek Church. They have long since fallen into stagnation, ignorance, superstition, and are to Christendom as a praying corpse to a living man. They are isolated fragments of the ancient Church history, and curious petrifactions from the Christological battlefields of the fifth and sixth centuries, coming to view amidst Mohammedan scenes. But Providence has preserved them, like the Jews, and doubtless not without design, through storms of war and persecution, unchanged until the present time. Their very hatred of the orthodox Greek Church makes them more accessible both to Protestant and Roman missions, and to the influences of western Christianity and western civilisation. On the other hand, they are a door for Protestantism to the Arabs and Turks, to the former through the Jacobites, to the latter through the Armenians. There is the more reason to hope for their conversion because the Mohammedans despise the old Oriental churches, and must be won, if at all, by a purer type of Christianity. In this respect the American missions among the Armenians in the Turkish empire are, like those among

the Nestorians in Persia, of great prospective importance, as outposts of a religion which is destined sooner or later to regenerate the east."[1]

The Patriarch of the Copts, who resides at Cairo, considers himself the legitimate successor of St. Mark. In ordination —a rite which it is his prerogative to perform—he does not observe the ancient practice of laying on hands, but breathes upon and anoints the man who is set apart to sacred functions. Among the Armenians, again, the dead hand of Gregory the Enlightener, to whom the nationality owed its conversion at the beginning of the fourth century, is used at the consecration of the Catholicus, or Patriarch. The most remarkable thing told of the Abyssinian Church, which is a branch of the Coptic, and the head of which is called Abbana ("Our Father"), is that it honours Pontius Pilate as a saint, because he washed his hands of innocent blood. The Jacobites of Syria and Mesopotamia owe their name to Jacob Baradai (so called from his beggarly clothing: Arabic and Syriac = "horse-blanket") or Zanzalus. This monk, having obtained consecration as a bishop from some who shared his heresy, laboured with remarkable zeal from 541, when he found the Monophysites in those regions on the verge of extinction, to 578, when he left them a powerful Church, with a patriarchate of their own.

[1] *History of the Christian Church*, vol. iii. p. 773.

CHAPTER LIV.

DOCTRINE OF THE PERSON OF CHRIST (*continued*).

The Monothelitic Heresy.

Out of the Monophysite controversy grew a new one—the Monothelitic—which, upon the Christological basis of the Symbolum Chalcedonense, the Church could not possibly set at rest by any other decision than that which was eventually arrived at. The question whether Christ had one will or two wills had been put at an earlier period, but its wide, violent discussion originated in another unhappy attempt to effect reconciliation and union. When the Emperor Heraclius was on his expedition against the Persian king, Chosroes II., it occurred to him that it would be desirable to regain the numerous Monophysites of Syria and Armenia, and to assure himself thenceforth of their political attachment. Now, Theodorus, Bishop of Pharan in Arabia, though he was not a Monophysite, had recently propounded the doctrine that in Christ the two natures were so united that there was in Him only one will and one way of working.[1] By the representations of some bishops (Theodorus being probably of the number, and, still more probably, Sergius, Patriarch of Constantinople), the Emperor was induced to believe that the Monophysites would certainly be reconciled to the Church if, the general question whether there be one or two natures in Christ being generally avoided, it were affirmed that there was in Him *μία θεανδρικὴ ἐνέργεια* ["one Divinely-human way of working"], a formula on which all might agree, as the Church had been entirely silent on the question of the will. As early as 622 the Emperor wrote to the Metropolitan of Cyprus, enjoining conformity to this dogmatic formula. But it was not till 638 that, supported by the opinion of Pope

[1] Ἓν θέλημα καὶ μία ἐνέργεια.

Honorius, as well as of Cyrus, Patriarch of Alexandria, who had been elevated to his see eight years before as being a Monothelite, he issued his famous edict, composed by Sergius of Constantinople, and called ἔκθεσις τῆς πίστεως. This edict did not positively denounce the doctrine of two wills, but declared that the Catholic faith required the acknowledgment of only one will in Christ. The ἔκθεσις was received generally with submission in the east, though there the Palestinian monk Sophronius, who became Bishop of Jerusalem, had, before the edict appeared, contended earnestly as the champion of the doctrine which it discountenanced. There, too, some time later, the abbot Maximus, who had once been an imperial secretary, distinguished himself on the same side by his great earnestness and ability, and by the stedfastness with which he adhered to his convictions till at last he was mutilated and murdered for them. But in the west the opposition to the ἔκθεσις was general and decided. The immediate successors of Honorius declared against it, and one of them went so far as to excommunicate the Monothelite Patriarch of Constantinople, whose name was Paulus (646). In 648 the Emperor Constans II. withdrew the edict that had caused such vehement dispute, and issued another, in which he sought to reach the same end—the pacification of the contending parties—but by means equally ineffectual and unwarrantable, though more impartial. This edict was called τύπος τῆς πίστεως ["Type of the Faith"]. It forbade, under penalties, all controversy on the "wills," and required all, priests and people, to keep within the bounds of the established symbols (which had not expressed anything on the subject). At the first Lateran Synod, Pope Martin I. condemned both edicts, and anathematised a number of Monothelite bishops. He was soon after seized as a traitor, tortured and banished, and at last died of starvation in the Crimea.

But the cause of the martyred pope was in the end triumphant. The Monothelite heresy was authoritatively condemned at the sixth ecumenical council — the First Trullan.[1] It was summoned in 680 by the Emperor Con-

[1] "Trullan" (τροῦλλος), from the dome over the hall of the imperial palace where the bishops assembled, or from the shell-like shape of the hall itself.

stantine Pogonatus, who presided in person. To this council Pope Agatho sent legates with an *Epistola Dogmatica*, which seems to have had as great weight as that of Leo had more than two centuries before. After deliberations that were protracted through many sessions, it was decided that there were in Christ "two natural wills and two natural operations, without division, without conversion or change, with nothing like antagonism, and nothing like confusion."[1] "Two natural wills not in opposition" (*δύο φυσικὰ θελήματα οὐχ ὑπεναντία*) are the most important words. Theodorus, Sergius, Honorius, and all who had maintained the Monothelite heresy, were anathematised, and the anathema was subsequently abundantly confirmed by both popes and councils.

Although a last spasmodic effort in favour of the Monothelite heresy was made by an Emperor (Philippicus Bardanes) thirty years later, it rapidly disappeared.[2] It is generally believed, however, that the old sect is represented in the Maronites, who, secure in the fastnesses of the Lebanon and the Anti-Lebanon, maintained an independent existence, and held the doctrine of one will, till, in the time of the Crusades, they submitted to the Church of Rome. But what their dogmatic view exactly was has been disputed. So also it is disputed whether they take their name from a monk, Maro, of the sixth century, or from a patriarch of that name who died at the beginning of the eighth.

There are three things that give importance to the Monothelite controversy.

1. It brings to a very sharp point the question as to the possibility of two perfect natures co-existing in one person. Can the human nature be regarded as complete without the human will? If not, how is it possible to conceive of two

[1] *θεὸν ἀληθῶς, καὶ ἄνθρωπον ἀληθῶς—τὸν αὐτὸν ἐκ ψυχῆς λογικῆς καὶ σώματος, καὶ δύο φυσικὰς θελήσεις ἤτοι θελήματα ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ δύο φυσικὰς ἐνεργείας, ἀδιαιρέτως, ἀτρέπτως, ἀμερίστως, ἀσυγχύτως, κατὰ τὴν τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων διδασκαλίαν, ὡσαύτως κηρύττομεν—καὶ δύο μὲν φυσικὰ θελήματα οὐχ ὑπεναντία. τὸ ἀνθρώτινον αὐτοῦ θέλημα, ὑποτασσόμενον τῷ θείῳ αὐτοῦ καὶ παντσθενεῖ θελήματι.*

At the thirteenth sitting, the anathema was pronounced over the authors and adherents of the Monothelite doctrine.

[2] Bardanes was overthrown in 713 in a military rising, and his eyes were put out. Anastasius II., immediately after his accession, declared his attachment to the orthodox faith.

wills in the one willing subject? This is a point at which no new difficulty is raised, but it is one at which many have felt most deeply the difficulty of the general question: "How can the finite and the infinite, the mortal and the immortal, man and God, form a real personal unity?" Or, as some would put it, "How can there be a true and proper incarnation?" That is the difficulty that the symbol of Chalcedon presents, but, happily, does not attempt to solve. The attempt would have involved further formulation. As it is, some may say they find too much in the symbol, but, if too much is exacted of the understanding, shall we not all say that too little is found in it for the believing, loving soul, which sees in the living Christ of the gospels a fulness of the Divine and a fulness of the human which no creed can express? The imposition of the dead hand of the Enlightener has a meaning, and has no doubt done good; but what is it to the power of the Redeemer as He dwelt among us—to the living hand that touched the leper, took up the little children, seized the sinking Peter, was lifted up in blessing on the Mount of Olives? But there, again, is the mystery—the hand of an omnipotent Divine Saviour. We have it in the lively oracles, as well as in the stiff creed. We do not escape mystery by leaving the herbarium for the garden—the decisions of councils for the Holy Scriptures, on which they profess to be founded. And, in point of fact, it was argued during this controversy that the God-man speaks of Himself as having a human will: "I came not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me;" "Not my will, but thine, be done." Moreover, it was argued that we need a Redeemer made like unto us in our whole nature, and if anything in our nature specially needed redemption, it was the will, in which sin originated. It behoved that the nature that was to be redeemed should first be taken, taken wholly, and by no means without the will. Another argument, on which stress was laid by Agatho, was that will is a property of the nature, not a *proprietas personalis;* otherwise we should be compelled to accept three wills in the Trinity.

2. The history of the controversy shows us a pope condemned and anathematised by an œcumenical council on a supposition of heresy. The fact is undeniable—it never was

denied except by one writer, Baronius—but it is not put quite in the true light by Kurtz when he says: "The synod went so far as to transmit to the pope an account of its transactions and to request him to ratify its decrees. Still the Greeks managed to put some wormwood into the pope's cup by carrying it that the council anathematised Pope Honorius along with the other representatives of the Monothelite heresy."[1] The papal legates, far from protesting against the anathema, signed it. Leo II., the successor of Agatho, who died soon after the meeting of the council, confirmed the proceedings with the anathema, and for a considerable period the authors of the heretical dogma, including Honorius, who was expressly mentioned, were anathematised by the popes in the confession of faith which they took at their accession. Still further, the seventh and eighth ecumenical councils confirmed the decisions of the sixth, and, in particular, the condemnation of Honorius. Nothing in history is more certain than that that pope declared himself, and wrote and argued, in favour of the Monothelites, and that he was condemned by council after council, and pope after pope, on that ground. The efforts made to reconcile the facts with the dogma of papal infallibility are astounding. They amount to this; that Honorius mistook the question, and, when he argued for the Monothelite doctrine, meant only that there were not two antagonistic wills in Christ. In one writer who takes this ground, I find the following: "The greatest want of clearness is shown by Honorius in his comment on the passage, 'Not my will, but thine, be done:' *Ista enim propter nos dicta sunt, quibus dedit exemplum, ut sequamur vestigia ejus, pius magister discipulos imbuens, ut non suam unusquisque nostrum, sed potius Domini in omnibus praeferat voluntatem.*"[2] This is precisely the explanation offered by other Monothelites—that Christ, for the sake of example, spoke as if He had a human will.[3] But let us accept the

[1] [§ 82, 8; § 52, 8 of new translation.]

[2] ["These things were spoken on account of us, to whom He gave an example that we should follow His footsteps—a Holy Teacher impressing on His disciples that each of us should prefer, not His own will, but rather, in all things, the will of the Lord."]

[3] Pope John IV. apologised to the Emperor (Constantine Pogonatus) for Honorius: "He meant only that there were not two contrary wills in Christ

defence of the orthodoxy of Honorius, and what then? We are asked to put our faith in a judge who is infallible, but who may be under an entirely false apprehension of the question on which he is called to decide. Of all the historical proofs against the dogma of infallibility, this has been the greatest "crux" to Roman Catholic historians.

3. The controversy shows in blackest colours the fruitless barbarity with which Byzantine despots, untaught by the disastrous failures of the past, still strove to enforce their own will in matters of faith. The most prominent sufferers were Martin I. and the abbot Maximus.[1] The former, who had condemned both the ἔκθεσις and the τύπος at the first Lateran Synod, was seized, dragged a prisoner to Constantinople, condemned as a traitor without being heard, or—what was as bad—after being heard with the utmost impatience and contempt, and was sentenced to be torn in pieces. The sentence, indeed, was not carried into execution, but he was banished to the Crimea, and there died, it is said, of starvation, after bearing all with a holy fortitude that knew no bitterness, but was worthy of a Chrysostom or of a Stephen, and glorifying to their common Master—manifesting such a spirit that we may say that, if Christianity had continued to be thus represented in high places, she would, as she had brought a ministry of mercy to Rome in her age and decrepitude, have

—as there are in us—the will of the spirit and the will of the flesh." So, too, Abbot Maximus, when in Africa (645), in conference with Pyrrhus, the successor of Sergius.

But Honorius was condemned afterwards.

According to Hefele, the pope was sound at heart, but did not hit the correct expression: "All he meant was a pure human will, morally at one with the Divine."

It is common enough to argue against what is supposed to be involved in the opposite doctrine (two, and *therefore* conflicting wills), but Honorius expressly said that he did not wish to seem either a Nestorian or a Eutychian.

"Concludamus itaque" (says Natalis Alexander), "Honorium a sexta synodo damnatum non fuisse ut hæreticum sed ut hæresis et hæreticorum fautorem, atque reum negligentiæ in illis coercendis; et justo fuisse damnatum, quia eadem culpa erroris fautores ac auctores ipsi tenentur. Honorius cum Sergio, Cyro. . . loquutus est (eorumque voces usurpavit), sed mente catholica, et sensu ab eorum errore penitus alieno; siquidem absolute duas voluntates Christi non negavit, sed voluntates pugnantes."

[1] He was abbot of Chrysopolis, near Chalcedon. He was the author of five dialogues on the Trinity, and in his other works treats of the incarnation—particularly of the "two wills."

been a meet nurse for the savage child from the forests of the north, to whom the dominion was given and in whom lay the hope of civilisation.

As to the octogenarian Maximus, they ploughed upon his back, tore out his tongue, cut off his right hand, and drove him away to a land of barbarians, among whom he died.[1]

And why were those men thus tortured, mutilated and killed, but just because they would not surrender their convictions at the bidding of an Emperor to whom they were a matter of absolute indifference, but whose will it was to have unity and peace, seeking these where they are not, and cannot be found—in the suppression of free inquiry and free speech? It is not only on the religious soil that fanaticism grows. Reason itself has had its fanatical worshippers, and here we see the desire for union, or what in this case amounts much to the same thing—the love of power in matters of faith—grow to a passion as wild, intolerant, and detestable as the fiercest and narrowest bigotry. As we have seen, the barbarity was fruitless. It would have been more deplorable had it succeeded. In all nations where history is studied, we may hope that the words of the Christian Cicero will take deep root: *Religio cogi non potest; verbis potius quam verberibus res agenda est, ut sit voluntas.*

[1] At Colchis, in 662.

CHAPTER LV.

THE PELAGIAN AND THE SEMI-PELAGIAN CONTROVERSY.

From the controversies concerning the relation of the Second and Third Persons of the Trinity to the Divine essence and to one another, and from the controversies concerning the relation of the two natures in Christ to His Divine Person and to one another, we pass now, in the natural and historical order, to the controversy concerning the relation of the human will to the Divine grace. This question, it is obvious, is most intimately connected with the fundamental Christian doctrine of redemption. What do we know of the origin and nature of the human sinfulness from which redemption is needed? What power for good, if any, has man in his unregenerate condition? Anthropological questions of this kind were little agitated in the east. They were discussed chiefly in the west, where the type of mind—and this is the explanation usually made—was more practical. It is a curious circumstance, noticed by some, that though Pelagianism was condemned (incidentally, and without much examination) by the third ecumenical council, yet none of the four Greek historians, Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret, and Evagrius, though they treat of that period, make the slightest mention of the controversy. As to the particular but extremely important point—the question of free-will—it is frequently said that the eastern divines, one and all, claimed for man full liberty of action, whether it impelled him to rise to a closer life with God, or to sink into greater depths of sin. To this, however, it has been as frequently answered that all they meant was to claim for man spontaneous action, and to assert individual accountability. But there can be little doubt that the Greek fathers used many expressions that cannot be thus explained away, and probably they are right who assign them, upon the whole, an intermediate position between Augustinianism and

Pelagianism, as holding, though without formulation, a synergism, in which the human will and Divine grace stand as equal factors in conversion, while the terms Augustinianism and Pelagianism express a monergism—the former a Divine, the latter a human, monergism—the former making man's part wholly the work of grace, the latter making grace a mere external help. But, while this may be true as a general account, there are passages that represent the activity as beginning with man. When we have chosen, teaches Chrysostom, then God grants help; and, he adds, when we ascribe all good to God, this is done in accordance with a common figure of speech; as, for example, we ascribe the building of a house to the architect, though others also, the work-people and the proprietor, have contributed their part. Gregory Nazianzen teaches that by the sin of Adam man has lost immortality and that closer walk with God which was enjoyed in Paradise, and that, moreover, a certain predominance of the flesh over the spirit has been transmitted from generation to generation, yet not of such a nature that he has lost the liberty to choose the good, though to use this liberty aright he needs Divine assistance.

On the other hand, the darker view of human nature in its fallen condition is traced back to a western, an African, older than Augustine by two centuries—Tertullian. Blunt is in part accounting for the anthropology of the west when he says: "Africa, the nursing-mother of Latin Christianity, was also *matricula causidicorum* (Juv. *Sat.*, vii. 148). Tertullian was actually versed in Roman law, and his writings in every page betray the legal mind. His authority of prescription was an application of legal principle and precedent; his arguments against heresy and error are logical deductions from data that were to the Christian what the maxims and decisions of the law were to the jurisconsult. The origin of evil, the question which lay at the root of every early heresy, was referred by him scripturally to the transgression of our first parents, but from them it descended, inbred in the very blood and bone of our nature; as the attaint of slavery attached to the offspring of endless generations, and can only be removed by manumission."

At the same time, Blunt maintains that "guilt was scarcely

held by Tertullian, or by any other writer before Augustine, to be a result of original sin;" by which I take him to mean involved in, and necessarily flowing from, original sin. In the same way are explained the strongest passages from Ambrose: "Before our birth we are tainted with contagion, and before the enjoyment of light we receive injury in our very origin, and are conceived in sin. . . . The mother generates each human being in iniquity. . . . The babe of a single day is not without sin." Here, it is said, we are to take sin only as an abstract idea; and similarly in the passage, "We have all sinned in the first man," where it is added: "By natural succession there is a succession also of faultiness (*culpæ*) transmitted from one to all. *Fuit Adam, et in illo fuimus omnes. Periit Adam, et in illo perierunt omnes.*"[1] There can be no doubt that Ambrose takes a strong view of original sin, whether individual guilt be involved or not, and, further, that he teaches a synergism, representing grace as needful at the very beginning of the Divine life. I believe, however, there is no passage in Ambrose in which the doctrine of unconditional personal election is clearly asserted, but there are many passsges that seem at variance with it. Augustine himself did not for some time hold the doctrine of total human inability, which unconditional election presupposes; and, as to original sin, he took the common view that it consisted mainly in ignorance, weakened power, and proneness to evil. He had formed more rigid views, however, before the controversy with Pelagius broke out.

The first who openly denied the *vitium originis* (an expression of Tertullian and of Hilary, who, however, ascribed to fallen man the power of originating faith in his own soul), appears to have been a Palestinian monk named Ruffinus. "The only ill," he is said to have taught, though this is probably a defective account of his teaching—"The only ill inherited from Adam was freedom to follow in his steps." He was joined by a brother monk from Britain, called Morgan, which, translated from Welsh into Latin, became Marigena ("Born by the Sea"), and, into Greek, Pelagius. To distinguish him from a less famous man of the same name, though of a different country, he was often called Brito.

[1] [*Exposit. Evang. Lucæ*, vii. § 30.]

Several writers have spoken of his broad shoulders, thick neck, and fat face, and founded on his appearance a charge of lascivious living, which rests on no other evidence. The language of the great St. Jerome, however, does not suggest the idea of voluptuousness and epicureanism. He describes him as *Scotorum pultibus pregravatus*—"heavy from feeding on Scotch porridge." Language of this sort, however, is never used by Augustine, whose references confirm the received opinion that Pelagius was a learned, mild-tempered man of irreproachable character—unless he be held as convicted of sometimes employing words with intentional ambiguity.

It was at the beginning of the fifth century that Pelagius, the Briton, came to Rome. He would then, it is supposed, be upwards of fifty years of age, for, according to a common tradition, which, however, is unsupported, he was born in the same year as his great adversary (354). When he arrived in the capital, his sympathy with the teaching of Rufinus was increased by his coming in contact with people who rejected the earnest demands of the Gospel on the ground that human nature was wholly corrupt. But instances in which the doctrine of the *vitium originis* was thus perverted, he is said to have encountered also in his own island, and among the monks. The famous saying of Augustine: *Da quod jubes, et jube quod vis* ["Give what Thou commandest, and command what Thou wilt"], which occurs in the *Confessions*, was reported to him, and gave him such offence that he almost broke with the bishop from whose lips he heard the quotation. Such language he thought inconsistent with responsibility. The obligation to obey God's commands rested on the sufficiency of man's unassisted power, his absolute freedom of choice. His view was afterwards expressed in a letter to Demetrius, which has been preserved. "As often," he says, "as I have to speak of moral improvement and the leading of a holy life, I am accustomed to set forth first the power and quality of human nature, and to show what it can accomplish. For never are we able to enter the path of the virtues, unless hope, as companion, draws us to them. For every longing after anything dies within us so soon as we despair of attaining that thing." Although Pelagius at this time wrote Commentaries on the

Pauline epistles, in which he stated his views, public attention was not drawn to his principles till he gained the alliance of the advocate Cœlestius, who, according to some, was an Italian, according to others, a Scotsman, whom he had converted, or, at all events, gained for the ascetic life, inducing him to give up his profession. It was with this man, younger, more energetic and argumentative than his teacher, that the public controversy broke out. After the sack of Rome by the Goths, under Alaric, in 411, the two friends betook themselves to Carthage, where Cœlestius remained for a considerable period, while Pelagius soon sailed for Palestine, where Jerome was for a time his friend. Cœlestius, continuing to labour at Carthage, where a very different anthropology from his had been developing itself, was rash enough to seek the office of presbyter; whereupon Paulinus of Milan, the biographer of Ambrose, came forward as his accuser at a synod held under the presidency of the Bishop Aurelius (412 or 411), and charged him with advancing seven heretical propositions. These were:—

1. Adam would have died even if he had not sinned; 2. The sin of Adam injured only himself; 3. All newly-born children are in the same position as Adam was in before the fall; 4. Men neither die in consequence of Adam's sin nor rise again in consequence of Christ's resurrection; 5. Newly born children who die without baptism inherit eternal life; 6. The law, as well as the Gospel, leads to the kingdom of heaven; 7. Even before Christ's coming there were sinless men.

The main proposition, that on which the whole controversy hinged, is the third, or, if you will, the second, for the one seems to involve the other. Cœlestius, though he maintained that his speculative principles left the substance of the faith untouched, was unable to justify himself in the eyes of the synod, and, instead of being appointed to the office he had sought, was excluded from the communion of the Church. He was successful, however, in Ephesus, to which he departed immediately after his condemnation at Carthage. The teaching of Cœlestius made a considerable, though transient, impression in Africa, and gained adherents numerous enough to call forth several writings from Augustine, who had not been present at the synod (411).

The residence of Pelagius in Palestine was the occasion of the controversy's being transplanted to that country, where it broke out soon after the first ecclesiastical decision was given in the west.

It can hardly be doubted that there was a fundamental difference between Jerome and Pelagius on the question of the *vitium originis;* but the monk of Bethlehem, unlike those high-souled men, Athanasius and Augustine, was wont to appear to great disadvantage in theological disputes. In this case he was irritated because Pelagius presumed to find fault with some passages in his Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians, and because he was not quite satisfied with his translation of the Old Testament from the Hebrew. In the aversion to Pelagius which such causes produced, and which led him to pronounce him *indoctus calumniator* he was strengthened by a young Spanish clergyman, Orosius, a scholar of Augustine's, who by his advice had betaken himself to the east in order to extend his studies under the guidance of Jerome. At a synod held at Jerusalem in 415, under the presidency of Bishop John, Orosius appeared as the accuser of Pelagius, but was not so successful as Paulinus had been at Carthage. The president was favourable to Pelagius, and, besides, there was great difficulty in carrying on the discussion, as Pelagius apparently was the only one present who knew both Greek and Latin, Orosius being able to speak only the latter, and the interpreter that was employed performing his part badly. In the end it was agreed to report the matter to the Bishop of Rome, Innocent I. In the same year (415), another synod for the trial of Pelagius was held at Diospolis, the Lydda of Scripture. It was attended by fourteen bishops, and was under the friendly presidence of Eulogius of Cæsarea. Here two bishops, Heros and Lazarus, who had been banished from Gaul, made a complaint in writing in concert with Jerome, but Pelagius succeeded in justifying himself against some twelve charges which were brought against him, his success, it is alleged, being won chiefly by ambiguities of expression, which had a Catholic sound. The result was that he was recognised as orthodox by this *synodus miserabilis,* as Jerome called it—a result, however, which was due, not merely, if at all, to the timidity,

or, as his adversaries called it, the duplicity of Pelagius, but to the violence of Jerome himself, and, above all, to the indefiniteness of the Greek theology. This is briefly, and, so far, well put by Guericke:—

"The Eastern Church still held the earlier and less definitely-stated type of doctrine respecting human apostasy and corruption, which had prevailed in the second and third centuries, —a type of anthropology which, indeed, in its general substance and whole intent was contrary to the Pelagian, but which, unlike that of Augustine and the western Latin fathers who preceded him, did not, by profound, exact, and thorough analyses and definitions, preclude the possibility of Pelagian modifications and deductions. When, consequently, Pelagius appeared in the east, professing in general terms his belief in the doctrine of grace and redemption,—by which he meant only an external arrangement and economy of God, whereby the human mind is enlightened by the perfect morality taught in Scriptures, and is stimulated and aided by precept and example to the practice of virtue,—the Oriental mind was easily induced to accept the statement as sufficient, and the more so because of its aversion to all close and perplexing investigation of the doctrine of original sin."[1]

At Diospolis Pelagius disavowed the opinions ascribed to Cœlestius and condemned at Carthage in 411, but he would not call them heretical. All he would admit was that there was folly in some of the propositions ascribed to Cœlestius. Augustine says of the decision of that Palestinian synod: "It was not heresy that was there acquitted, but the man that denied the heresy." He had been informed of the acquittal by Pelagius himself, who sent him an exulting communication on the subject; and it would seem that in the east the triumph of Pelagius called forth too many demonstrations, for a multitude, headed by ecclesiastics, broke into the monastery at Bethlehem, set it on fire, and compelled the aged Jerome, who had been the chief instigator of the prosecution, to take to flight.

It was impossible that the verdict of Diospolis could give satisfaction in Africa. Not only did Augustine combat the Pelagian doctrine with new ardour in many writings, but

[1] *Church History*, vol. i. p. 385 [Shedd's trans.].

two synods, convoked the following year (416), the one at Carthage, attended by sixty-eight bishops, and the other at Milevium, attended by sixty-one, solemnly pronounced sentence of condemnation. These synods sent information of their proceedings to Innocent I. of Rome, soliciting his approbation and concurrence; and, in addition to the synodical communication, there came to him a letter from five African bishops, of whom the Bishop of Hippo was one, accusing Pelagius and Cœlestius of denying "grace" in the proper biblical sense, and understanding by it partly man's natural powers, and partly the historical revelation. Innocent, without waiting to receive any explanation from the other side, expressed his concurrence in the African verdict, and at the same time commended the synods for having appealed to the Church of St. Peter. Next year (417) Innocent died, and was succeeded by Zosimus, who was probably, as his name indicates, from the east, and who is supposed not to have shared the dogmatic convictions which his predecessor had expressed. His knowledge of the controversy that had arisen he drew partly from a letter which Pelagius had addressed to Innocent, and which had not been brought to Rome till after that pope's death, and partly from oral communication with Cœlestius, who had appeared in the capital. Cœlestius not only had interviews with Zosimus, but presented a creed evincing great skill both in the use of orthodox phraseology and in the art of flattering the Apostolic See.[1] "Free-will," it says, "we do so own as to say that we always stand in need of God's help, and that as well they are in an error who say with the Manicheans that a man cannot avoid sin, as they who affirm with Jovinian that a man cannot sin. For both of these take away the freedom of the will. But we say that a man always is in a state that he may sin or may not sin, so as to own ourselves always to be of a free-will. This is, most blessed pope, our faith which we have always learned in the Catholic Church and have always held. In which if there be anything unwarily or unskilfully expressed, we desire it may be amended by you, who do hold both the faith and the see of Peter. And if this our confession be approved by the judgment of your apostleship, then whosoever shall have

[1] The creed is only partially preserved.

a mind to find fault with me will show not me to be a heretic, but himself unskilful, or spiteful, or even no Catholic."

To this "shrewd humility," as Guericke terms it, are partly ascribed the strong measures which Zosimus immediately took. He wrote to the African bishops, censuring them for not having sufficiently investigated the matter on which they had pronounced, and for having indulged in hair-splitting speculations which they vainly imagined would make them wise above what is written, and, while thus rebuking them, requiring either that accusers should appear personally at Rome within two months, or that the charge of heresy against Pelagius and Cœlestius should be for ever abandoned.

This sentence, favourable to Pelagianism, has been compared with the papal condemnation of Jansenism, but the circumstances are entirely different. Zosimus cannot be said to have had the real question or questions before him; and, further, the controversy was a new one—one on which it could not be said that ecclesiastical authorities had already pronounced with a decisive and consentient voice. It is a mere supposition, founded chiefly on the Greek name, that Zosimus showed a bias at all; and, as the representations by which he was misled contained nothing positively heretical, his orthodoxy remains unimpeachable, whatever may be thought of his discernment or his fairness.

But Zosimus soon learned that the Africans, instead of submitting, had reaffirmed their decision at successive synods, and finally at a provincial council, which was attended by two hundred and fourteen bishops, who, after asserting their independence, laid down eight or nine canons in condemnation of Pelagianism. These were as follows:—

1. Whosoever says that the first man was created mortal, and would have died even without sin, by natural necessity, let him be anathema.

2. Whosoever denies the necessity of infant baptism, or holds that the language of the baptismal formula, "for the remission of sins," when applied to infants, is to be understood not in a strict but in a loose sense, let him be anathema.

3. Whosoever says that in the kingdom of heaven or elsewhere, there is a certain middle place, where children dying

without baptism live happy, while yet without baptism they cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven, let him be anathema.

[This proposition is doubtful.]

4. Whosoever says that the grace of God whereby a man is justified through Jesus Christ merely effects the forgiveness of sins already committed, but helps not to avoid sins in the future, let him be anathema.

5. Whosoever says that grace is given merely to bring to the knowledge of the Divine will, let him be anathema.

6. Whosoever says that the grace of justification is given us that through it we may more easily perform that which we could perform without the grace—only not so easily—let him be anathema.

8. Whosoever says the saints utter the petition of the Lord's Prayer, "Forgive us our debts," not for themselves, but for others, let him be anathema.

9. Whosoever says that the saints utter the petition "Forgive us our debts," only from humility, let him be anathema.[1]

The canons of this synod, followed up by imperial edicts, and particularly by a rescript which Theodosius and Honorius jointly signed, and which pronounced sentence of banishment on Pelagius and his adherents, effected an entire change in the Roman policy. Zosimus, surrounded at Rome itself by a mightier Anti-Pelagian party than he had been aware of, and intimidated at once by the imperial edicts and by the firmness of the ecclesiastical courts, issued a circular letter (*epistola tractoria*), in which he expressed concurrence with the condemnation passed by the African bishops on the doctrines and the persons of Pelagius and Cœlestius, and which he sent round the whole Western Church, requiring, under pain of deposition and banishment, subscription from all bishops. Eighteen or nineteen bishops who refused to sign this papal document were deposed. Among them was a man who became the leading theologian and controversialist on the Pelagian side—Julian, Bishop of Eclanum, who, soon after his ejection, addressed, in his own name and in the name of those who had suffered under the same sentence,

[1] The propositions are translated, almost literally, from Hefele.

a letter to Zosimus, demanding that a general council should be convoked to decide the question. His demand having been refused, those of the deposed bishops who continued to adhere to their Pelagian tenets, sought sympathy in distant quarters, but in most places their doctrines were rejected. In the year 429 some of the most considerable of the party, including Julian and Cœlestius, sought refuge at Constantinople with Nestorius, who, though he disapproved of some of their views, and especially of their denial of the *vitium originis*, gave them a friendly reception, and even inquired of the Roman Bishop, Cœlestius, why they had been condemned, thus showing, obviously, that he did not consider the points on which he differed from them as of essential importance.

The protection, however, which Nestorius accorded them, was fatal to their cause, for it was generally believed in the east that there was some connection between their doctrines and his. Hence, at the third ecumenical council (431), when the latter were condemned, the former also received, as one writer expresses it, the *coup de grâce*. Pelagians are condemned in the first and fourth canons, but no indication is given of the grounds on which sentence was passed. Thus, in the fourth canon—and there is nothing more explicit in the first—it is simply said: "The Synod decides that all who fall away and dare, either privately or publicly (ἢ κατ' ἰδίαν ἢ δημοσίᾳ) to express the opinions of Nestorius and Cœlestius shall be deposed."

But even if the ecumenical council had explicitly condemned the principal points in the Pelagian system, it would not follow that it adopted the Augustinian. In fact, the doctrines of grace and predestination as held by the Bishop of Hippo never have been accepted by the Greek Church. Schaff, I may mention, endeavours to show that there was some reason for putting Pelagius or Cœlestius in the same category as Nestorius; for "indeed there is a certain affinity between them: both favour an abstract separation of the Divine and the human, the one in the person of Christ, the other in the work of conversion, forbidding all organic unity of life."[1] The question arises whether, on the principle here

[1] [*History of the Christian Church*, vol. iii. p. 801.]

laid down, we ought not to put the entire ecumenical council in the same category as Nestorians. For, as is admitted by Schaff and questioned by no one, the Greek Church, though she in name condemned Pelagianism, has never received the positive doctrines of Augustine, but has continued to teach synergistic or Semi-Pelagian views, thus making the separation between the human and the Divine in the work of conversion as wide—to say the least—as the separation made by Nestorius between the two natures in the person of Christ. In short, Schaff, from his Augustinian point of view, has some show of reason for putting Nestorians and Pelagians in the same category, but the ecumenical council of Ephesus did not look at the question in the same light, and, though purely external causes may have led them to suppose a connection between the two heresies, there is no ground for believing that they held any views on the human will and the Divine grace that the Patriarch of Constantinople, whom they named along with Cœlestius, could not have himself subscribed.

At the time of its condemnation by the Council of Ephesus, the Pelagian party was not strong, and after this date there is nothing memorable in its history, though there is evidence that shoots of it sprang up from time to time in different parts of the world, down to the end of the century. Nothing is known with certainty of the last years or of the death of Pelagius. According to some, he had died as early as 418; according to others, his death took place at a much later date. How long Cœlestius survived his teacher and friend is likewise unknown, but it is recorded of Julian that he became a schoolmaster in Sicily and died about 454, after having given all his goods to feed the poor in time of famine.

It was inevitable that some should take a middle way between the parties which had contended, the one for a human, the other for a Divine, monergism. Hence arose what was in scholastic times designated Semi-Pelagianism, which was indeed condemned by the early Church (the Church of the six first centuries), but reasserted itself with power, and became the prevalent system, or rather direction, till, it may be said, it won its final triumph in the decisions of the Council of Trent.

The Semi-Pelagian controversy began in North Africa. In the cloister of Adrumetum some monks had been plunged into great mental distress by the doctrine of absolute predestination, while others had made it the excuse for indifference and licentiousness. Some disputed concerning the meaning, others questioned the truth, of the Augustinian theory. In these circumstances the *via media* of synergism naturally commended itself as a remedy for the ills of the little world. But Augustine, who was informed by the abbot himself, Valentinus, of the state of affairs and the new opinions which were arising in the cloister, composed and sent to Adrumetum his two treatises *De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio* and *De Correptione et Gratia*, which appear to have been considered satisfactory, and to have nipped the nascent heresy.

But soon it sprang up in another quarter, and was powerfully defended by a man who is otherwise an interesting personage in the history of the Church, but who is known especially as the founder of Semi-Pelagianism. This was John Cassian. He was of Scythian or of Gothic extraction, and had been a monk, first in Bethlehem, and afterwards in Egypt. At Constantinople, to which he came from Egypt, he had been ordained deacon by Chrysostom, and, during the banishment of the latter, had been sent on a mission to Innocent I. of Rome, by whom, if he had not been previously by the Bishop of Constantinople, he was ordained to the office of presbyter. Subsequently he settled at Marseilles, where he founded two cloisters for both sexes, and became the chief promoter of the monastic life in the south of France. Here he wrote several works, and in one of them, the *Collationes Patrum*, he propounds the principal theses of the Semi-Pelagian system. In answer to Cassian, whose views were brought before him by two laymen, Hilary and Prosper, Augustine had time to write the works *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* and *De Dono Perseverantiæ*; but these treatises had not the immediate success which attended the two composed for the monks of Adrumetum.

The following are some of the points of difference between the Semi-Pelagian system and that of Augustine. Cassian denied:—(1) Unconditional election; (2) Total inability; (3) Irresistible grace; (4) Perseverance of saints. (?)

On the other hand, he held, contrary to the Pelagian system:—(1) Deterioration of human nature; (2) that death and suffering are a consequence of the Fall; (3) the need of inward grace.

The controversy with the Semi-Pelagians, or the Massiliensians, as they were called, was carried on on the Augustinian side chiefly by Prosper (afterwards secretary to Leo the Great), in both prose and verse. His principal work is entitled *De Gratia Dei et Libero Arbitrio contra Collatorem.* Among the pre-eminent men of the opposite party is now commonly reckoned the celebrated Vincentius Lerinensis. The very work to which he owes his fame, and in which is found his dictum: *Quod semper et ubique et ab omnibus creditum est* ["What is believed always and everywhere, and by all"], is supposed to have been directed in part against Augustine, who, however, is not named. The work was the *Commonitorium pro Catholicæ Fidei Antiquitate.* Vincentius himself, it may be noticed, like all who in subsequent times have adopted the doctrine of Catholic tradition, has been accused of following his own individual bias, and seeking the establishment of his own views, in his application of his three tests, *vetustas, universalitas, consensio* ["antiquity, universality, agreement"].

In the course of the controversy was written a work (first published in 1643) entitled *Prædestinatus*, concerning which it is still matter of dispute which side it was intended to support, some holding that it was composed by a foolish and extravagant partisan of the Augustinian anthropology, and others holding that its author was an artful and ingenious adversary, whose aim was to bring discredit on that system by pushing its principles to extreme conclusions. Neander takes the former view, but extracts given both by Baur and by Blunt, are sufficient to refute it. The book speaks of a double predestination—a predestination to sin and death, as well as a predestination to righteousness and life, and, in both aspects, speaks of the irresistible will of God in a style which no rational adherent of the Augustinian doctrine would employ, but which is frequent on the lips of objectors. "Those whom God has predestined from everlasting to life, careless, sinful, and reluctant though they may be, will infallibly inherit

glory; while those who have been doomed by a like decree to death, though they are all earnest endeavour, run without the possibility of attaining the goal of their hopes. Those who are predestined to salvation, even if they will not come, are yet against their will brought to life. Those who are predestined to wrath, even if they run, even if they flee, labour in vain." The work consisted—

(1) Of a description of ninety heresies, beginning with that of Simon Magus and ending with that of Predestination; (2) of a book under Augustine's name—but the writer could not believe it to be Augustine's—professing to give the views of the predestinationists; (3) a refutation of the second part (which could not be difficult). If we suppose the work to contain a forgery, the writer acted upon the principle that the end sanctifies the means. "As all stratagems are allowed in war, so, in the opinion of some, theological error may be combated by indirect as well as direct modes of attack."[1] "By these means," according to Guericke (by stating and, in part, misstating, the Augustinian system, in the most "abrupt and startling phraseology")—"by these means, and owing to the then general prevalence of Semi-Pelagianism in a part of Gaul, it was brought about, that at the councils of Arles and Lyons (472—475), the presbyter Lucidus, a defender of strict Augustinianism, though not a comprehensive and wise one, was condemned, and compelled to retract; and the Semi-Pelagian system, enunciated, at the request of the first-mentioned synod, by Faustus, bishop of Rhegium, in his work *De Gratia Dei et humanæ mentis libero arbitrio*, was approved."[2] Guericke goes on, after some notice, of Fulgentius of Ruspe and Cæsarius of Arles, to say that, under the influence of the latter, the Council of Orange (Arausio), in 529, laid down the Augustinian system as the Catholic orthodoxy, not merely in opposition to Pelagianism, but also in opposition to Semi-Pelagianism, and all grades of the synergistic theory of regeneration. The decisions of this council, which was attended by fourteen bishops, were approved in the same year by the Synod of Valentia (Valence), and, in 539, by the

[1] Blunt. See Möller on *Prædestinatus* in Herzog's Encyclopædia [Art. *Semi-Pelagianismus*].

[2] [*Church History*, p. 397.]

Roman Bishop, Boniface II.[1] The language used by Kurtz[2] is similar, but Roman Catholics and others maintain that the doctrine of predestination and that of the propagation and imputation of Adam's sin are left to private speculation. These were points on which the Roman See did not then pronounce, and never has pronounced.

On one point, however, and that an extremely important one, the Council of Orange, and, therefore, also the Roman See, declared itself with the utmost distinctness. In a considerable number of its twenty-five canons, and with great variety of phrases that leave no doubt as to the meaning, it teaches that all spiritual good, including the beginning of faith, the disposition to pray, the desire for baptism, originates in, and should be wholly ascribed to, Divine grace. For example: "Si quis ut a peccato purgemur voluntatem nostram deum expectare contendit, non autem ut etiam purgari velimus per Sancti Spiritus infusionem et operationem in nos fieri confitetur, resistit ipsi Spiritui Sancto per Salomonem dicenti: præparatur voluntas a Domino (LXX. ἑτοιμάζεται θέλησις παρὰ κυρίου) et apostolo salubriter prædicanti: Deus est qui operatur in nobis et velle et perficere pro bona voluntate."[3] But, while the council speaks of inward grace as invariably the source of spiritual good, it nowhere calls it irresistible. Further, all that it says of predestination is in opposition to the so-called "predestinarians": "Aliquos vero ad malum credimus divina potestate prædestinatos esse non solum non credimus, sed etiam si sunt qui tantum malum credere velint, cum omni detestatione illis anathema dicimus."[4]

[1] To whom, as a priest, Cæsarius had written. He became pope in 530.

[2] [§ 83, 5; § 53, 5 in new trans.]

[3] ["If anyone contends that God waits for our will that we may be purged from sin, but does not confess that it is through the infusion and working of the Holy Spirit upon us that we even desire to be purged, he resists the Holy Spirit Himself, who saith through Solomon, The heart is prepared of the Lord, and also the apostle, who salutarily preaches: It is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of His good purpose."]

Felix IV. had sent to Cæsarius (!) sentences taken from Augustine, Prosper, etc. On these the canons were based.—Hergenröther [*Kirchengesch.* 1ter Band s. 307.]

[4] ["But not only do we not believe that some are predestined to evil by the Divine power, but also, if there are those who are willing to believe so great an evil, we with all detestation pronounce anathema upon them."]

In the "epilogue," as Hefele calls it, a short creed was annexed to the canons.

We now return to the original systems, between which stood the Semi-Pelagianism of the Massiliensians and the Semi-Augustinianism of the Council of Orange.

The deepest difference, according to some, between Augustine and Pelagius was that the one was intensely theistic, looking upon all activity of the creature, both rational and irrational, as resting on the almighty and omnipresent activity of God; while the other was deistic, his tendency being to loosen, as far as possible, the relation in which man stands to God, the fountain of all.

1. The controversy takes us back to the *status integritatis* —to man in his original condition. Adam was viewed by Augustine as *sine ullo vitio factus rectus* ["made upright, without any fault"]. His will was originally directed to that which is good. He cherished the spirit of obedience to God, which is the mother of all virtues. He had a certain natural holiness (*sanctitas quædam naturalis*). In this obedience of spirit and direction of the will toward God consists man's true freedom—a freedom involving the harmony of the higher and the lower powers. As for the formal liberty of choosing between good and evil, Adam certainly possessed it; but it was not the highest thing in man—the greatest *bonum naturæ* —the greatest present of heaven. To conceive of him as placed in a middle and unbiassed position between good and evil—to ascribe to him indifference—is of itself to suppose a deterioration of that nature which was created in perfection. Man had in his unfallen estate such understanding that the most intelligent now are in comparison with him but as tortoises in comparison with birds. And his understanding and his will were in harmony. Not only was he endowed with the power of willing what was good, but his will was itself good. He was, however, not immutable. His rightly directed will did not exclude the possibility of sinning. At his creation he had not the *non posse peccare* ["inability to sin"] but only the *posse non peccare* ["ability not to sin"], which involves the possibility of sinning (the *posse peccare*). Man, made in the image of God, had not God's impeccability, the *major libertas*, but this *minor libertas* of being able not to

sin.[1] To continue in his integrity, he needed the *adjutorium gratiæ*, which is distinguished from the *donum perseverantiæ*, and means the help which even unfallen beings, as the creatures of God, require that they may keep their first estate. As man had the *posse non peccare*, so also he had the *posse non mori* ["the being able not to die"]—the *immortalitas minor*. Had he remained sinless, the mortality would have been swallowed up, and he would, without pain, have slumbered over into the *immortalitas major*—the not being able to die.

The most remarkable thing in this account of unfallen man's condition is that Augustine, equally with Pelagius, ascribes to his will a self-determining power, and therefore, if he denies that power—the *liberum arbitrium*—to the fallen man, it is not because he is driven to it by a philosophical theory. This is noticed by Schaff, who, quoting from Dr. Cunningham and Dr. Shedd passages which set forth that Augustine did not deny freedom in the sense of spontaneous action, says that neither of them "takes any account of the different forms and degrees of freedom in the Augustinian system," and then, speaking of the *liberum arbitrium*, says: "Here Augustine goes half way with Pelagius; especially in his earlier writings, in opposition to Manichæism, which denied all freedom, and made evil a natural necessity and an original substance. Like Pelagius he ascribes freedom of choice to the first man before the fall. God created man with the double capacity of sinning or not sinning, forbidding the former and commanding the latter. But Augustine differs from Pelagius in viewing Adam not as poised in entire indifference between good and evil, obedience and disobedience, but as having a positive constitutional tendency to the good, yet involving, at the same time, a possibility of sinning."[2] This important distinction, he adds in a note, is overlooked by Baur. It takes off the edge of his sharp criticism of the Augustinian system, in which he charges it with inconsistency in starting from the same idea of freedom as Pelagius, yet opposing it. On the same page, however, Schaff confesses: "Augustine incidentally concedes that the *liberum arbitrium*

[1] Compare the *adjutorium gratiæ* and the grace shown in Christ.

[2] [*History of the Christian Church*, vol. iii. p. 821, note and text.]

still so far exists even in fallen man, that he can choose, not indeed between sin and holiness, but between individual actions within the sphere of sinfulness and of *justitia civilis*." Admitting the inconsistency, however, I do not think that the main positions of the Augustinian theology are seriously affected by it. Augustine does not appear to have thought the *liberum arbitrium* as of any moral value when it was possessed; and, on the other hand, there is nothing which he more consistently affirms of unfallen man than the *dura necessitas mali* (in opposition to the *felix necessitas boni* in God and in all who, having first received the *donum perseverantiæ*, afterwards wear the unfading crown of righteousness). What is to be noticed is that the Augustinian theology, as originally propounded, was not based upon, or supported by, the doctrine of necessity.

But, while Augustine and Pelagius agreed in ascribing to man the *liberum arbitrium* before the fall, the contrast in other respects is sufficiently marked. According to the latter, as has been indicated in the history of the controversy, the condition of man before the fall was just what it is now. He occupied a position of indifference between good and evil. He had the power to choose the good and to adhere to it without Divine help. He had neither the *posse non mori* nor the *non posse mori*. He was created with a mortal body. On this point, however, there was a difference of view among the followers of Pelagius. Julian of Eclanum thought that, if Adam had not sinned, he might have attained immortality through eating of the fruit of the tree of life.

How it was possible for man (who was said to be *sine ullo vitio factus rectus*) to commit sin, Augustine felt he could not adequately explain. The *liberum arbitrium*, in the exercise of which man violated the Divine command, belonged originally to the nature of human reason. It was not, however, to the seduction of sense that man in the first instance yielded, as such seduction, according to Augustine, presupposes a certain inward corruption. Sin, he believed, began in Adam's placing himself above the Divine command. It began with pride. This inward fall having preceded, he was moved by outward temptation to transgress the Divine precept. *In*

Paradiso ab animo cœpit elatio, et ad præceptum transgrediendum deinde consensio.[1]

But whence came man's pride, or, in other words, according to the Augustinian view, the corruption of the will? The evil will does not come from God: it comes from nothing, and hence the impossibility of explaining the origin of evil[2]: *Sciri non potest quod ex nihilo est* ["It is impossible to know what arises from nothing"]. Sin is a negation: it is the absence, the weakening or loss of power. But, though no substance, it brings ruin and death, as the want of food infallibly destroys the body. If we are perishing, it is for lack of that which our souls need. That something is lacking. Something has been lost. The painful feeling is found in the breast of even an unregenerate man, and is the *index generositatis suæ*—the "sign of his high origin."

2. In consequence of Adam's transgression, sin is ingrained in all his offspring (*peccatum originale—hæreditarium vitium*). The new-born child is tainted and chargeable with guilt before it is capable of committing an actual individual violation of the Divine law. The exegetical proof on which Augustine chiefly rested this doctrine is generally admitted to be a false translation. He finds it in the latter part of Rom. v. 12, *in quo omnes peccaverunt*—"As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, in that all have sinned." I am far from saying that the doctrine of original sin falls with the erroneous *in quo* on which Augustine laid such stress, or even that the particular verse in which the false rendering occurs is not to be viewed as teaching it when the true rendering is given. Exegetes who admit the error may still contend that the verse and the whole context prove a causal connection between the sin of Adam and the sinfulness of his posterity. It is scarcely just, then, to say that the foundation of the whole edifice of the Augustinian doctrine is a blunder in the Latin version. But with this mistranslation *in quo* is connected the theory by which Augustine endeavoured to show that the posterity of Adam, including those who have not

[1] ["In Paradise pride began from the mind, and then came the agreement to transgress the command."]

[2] The evil will has no *causa efficiens*, but only a *causa deficiens*.

committed individual transgression, are justly chargeable with the guilt of his sin. All men, he contended, were not merely represented by Adam, but, as a species, existed in him. It was human nature that sinned in Adam. It was the will of the race that was expressed by his disobedience, so that the imputation of his sin is no fiction, and no violation of the thesis: *esse non potest sine voluntate peccatum.* Certainly the doctrine of imputation in the most rigid sense has thus a basis. But has the theory itself a basis? Though Jonathan Edwards gave some countenance to this idea, it is generally rejected. Thus Principal Cunningham says: "This idea has no sanction from the Scripture, and is indeed quite unintelligible as a supposed description of an actual reality."[1] You know the way in which the doctrine of imputation as held by Calvinistic divines is commonly put. We may take the same writer's statement of it, though this is hardly necessary. "The peculiarity of the doctrine," he says, "is, that it brings in *another* species of oneness" (than that in which he stands as progenitor of the race) "as subsisting between Adam and his posterity, viz., that of federal representation or covenant headship, *i.e.*, the doctrine that God made a covenant with Adam, and that in this covenant he represented his posterity, the covenant being made not only for himself, but for them, including in its provisions them as well as himself; so that, while there was no *actual* participation by them in the moral culpability or blameworthiness of his sin, they became, in consequence of his failure to fulfil the covenant engagement, *rei*, or incurred *reatus*, or guilt in the sense of legal answerableness, to this effect, that God, on the ground of the covenant, regarded and treated them as if they had themselves been guilty of the sin whereby the covenant was broken; and that in this way they became involved in all the natural and penal consequences which Adam brought *upon himself* by his first sin."[2]

Augustine, however, sought to go deeper. He started from the thesis that God could not regard us as guilty unless we were guilty.

The argument in support of *peccatum originale* (as involving guilt) that Pelagius had most difficulty in answering was that

[1] [*Histor. Theol.* vol. i. p. 514.] [2] [*Ibid.* p. 515.]

drawn from infant baptism and the exorcism which, from an early age, was connected with the administration of that rite. The sacrament would be unmeaning unless there were congenital sin in those to whom it was dispensed, and that that congenital sin included more than a proneness to evil appeared from the words of the customary formula—"for the remission of sins." Pelagius did not deny that it had been customary to baptize infants, nor was he disposed to question the beneficial effect of the rite in their case. He believed that there were two conditions of blessedness in the future world: eternal life, to which all who in infancy died unbaptized were raised, and the beatific vision, or kingdom of heaven, into which only the baptized could be admitted. The administration of the rite was indispensable to the attainment of this highest felicity.

Julian sums up his reasoning against the doctrine of original sin in the following five points:—

(1.) If God is the Creator of men, they cannot be born with a sinful nature. (2.) If marriage is in itself good, its fruit cannot be evil. (3.) If all sins are forgiven in baptism, then those who are born from the baptized (the regenerate) cannot inherit original sin. (4.) If God is righteous, He cannot condemn in the children the sins of the parents whilst He forgives the parents even their own sins. This point is sometimes stated more generally: If God is righteous, He cannot condemn children for the sins of others. (5.) If human nature is capable of perfect righteousness, it cannot be naturally (inherently) sinful.

Under the first point—"If God is the Creator of men, they cannot be born with a sinful nature"—it was argued that there could not be a propagation of sins unless there were a propagation of souls. But the *tradux animæ* was regarded by the Pelagians as a pernicious error. No father of any name had held it except Tertullian, who, however, held at the same time that all beings, not excepting the Highest, were corporeal. This gross idea of propagation, it was represented, was at the bottom of the Augustinian doctrine that the entire human race had become *massa damnata—massa perditionis* ["condemned mass"—"mass of perdition"] in consequence of Adam's disobedience. But Augustine, while

he could not look upon Traducianism as an odious heresy, or as a heresy at all, did not admit that he had adopted it, or that there was any logical necessity for his adopting it. "As both soul and body," he wrote in his work against Julian, "are alike punished, unless what is born is purified by regeneration, certainly either both are derived in their corrupt state from man,[1] or the one is corrupted by the other, as if in a corrupt vessel, where it is placed by the secret justice of the Divine law.[2] But which of these is true I would rather learn than teach (*Doce me ut doceam*), lest I should presume to teach what I do not know." Again: "Bring forward on this, so dark a subject, what you please, if only that sentiment remain firm and unshaken, that the death of all is the fault of that one, and that in him all have sinned." I need hardly mention that Creationism—the doctrine that the soul created by God is infused into a child before birth—has become the prevalent one in the Church. But how, then, did Augustine escape the charge of making God the author of sin? You must recall his view of sin as not a substance, but an accident, and, at the same time, a negation. It had its origin in the human will—in the aggregate human will. But how it arose there is inexplicable: *Sciri non potest quod ex nihilo est.* In connection with this view of sin, it is important (under the fifth head as under this) that Augustine would never admit that original sin (*peccatum originale—hæreditarium vitium*) could with propriety be called *malum naturale*—"a natural evil." It was, he contended, in opposition to Manicheism, neither substantial nor natural.

(2.) If marriage is in itself good, its fruit cannot be evil.

If Augustine had difficulty in answering this argument, it was mainly because of the severe, ascetic sense in which he was wont to use the words *concupiscentia carnis* ["lust of the flesh."] Marriage is in itself good, but in the fallen condition of the persons contracting it the *concupiscentia carnis* is its inseparable accident, and so all are conceived in sin. He would have been more consistent, many think, if he had pronounced marriage a necessary evil. It is scarcely fair to Pelagius to say, as Schaff does [vol. iii. p. 840], that in this respect there was no material difference between him and

[1] Traducianism. [2] Creationism.

Augustine. Pelagius went as far, and even further, in his praise of virginity as the highest form of Christian virtue. Pelagius might hold that a life of celibacy was most favourable to the practice of virtue, but he did not think that any natural impulse, if controlled in accordance with the Divine law, could be regarded as sinful.

(3.) If all sins are forgiven in baptism, then those who are born from the baptized (regenerate) cannot inherit original sin. To this the reply was that baptism takes away the *reatus* of original sin, not the sin itself. In keeping with his theory concerning the *concupiscentia carnis*, Augustine said further: "Regenerated parents produce not as sons of God, but as children of the world." Or again, as a circumcised parent begets an uncircumcised child; as pure wheat, when sown, produces both wheat and chaff; as from the seed of the good olive a wild olive grows; so a parent who is spiritually cleansed begets a son that resembles him, not according to that state in which he is by spiritual regeneration, but according to the state in which he is by carnal generation.

(4.) The reply to the fourth point has been sufficiently indicated under other heads. Schaff puts it in the general form: "It contradicts the righteousness of God to suppose one man punished for the sin of another," and says truly: "Augustine thus makes all men sharers in the fall, so that they are, in fact, punished for what they themselves did in Adam. But this by no means fully solves the difficulty."[1] And then he proceeds in language which is the more striking because it comes from one who accepts most decidedly and devoutly the doctrines of grace as taught by Augustine. That father, he says, "should have applied his organic view differently, and should have carried it farther. For if Adam must not be isolated from his descendants, neither must original sin be taken apart from actual sin. God does not punish the one without the other. He always looks upon the life of man as a whole; upon original sin as the fruitful mother of actual sins; and he condemns a man, not for the guilt of another, but for making the deed of Adam his own, and repeating the fall by his own voluntary transgression.

[1] [Schaff's *History of the Christian Church*, vol. iii. p. 840.]

This every one does who lives beyond unconscious infancy. But Augustine, as we have already seen, makes even infancy subject to punishment for original sin alone, and thus unquestionably trenches not only upon the righteousness of God, but also upon His love, which is the beginning and end of His ways, and the key to all His works."[1]

3. The next head under which we may regard the two systems is that of the "necessity of grace." The expression was used on both sides, but, as respectively indicated, in very different senses. The necessity of grace was affirmed in the creed which Cœlestius submitted to Zosimus, and with which the latter was satisfied; and we learn that Pelagius expressed his readiness to subscribe the following sentence: "I do anathematise any one who says or thinks that the grace of God, by which Christ came into the world to save sinners, is not necessary every hour and every moment, and also in every action; and they that deny this grace incur eternal punishment."

What then did the Pelagians understand by grace? They meant mainly these three things:—

(1.) Free-will; (2.) Forgiveness; (3.) Revelation (external).

(1.) The gift of free-will, which, according to the Pelagian view, involves now, as in the beginning, before the fall, the *possibilitas boni* ["possibility of good"]. This moral freedom —supposing man still to possess it—may justly be called a Divine gift; but to comprehend it under the term "grace" is confusing and misleading. But in this sense, obviously, grace was necessary to every good action—we may say to every action. An action was resolved into three constituents: the capacity, the will (volition), the act—*posse*, *velle*, and *esse*. Every action involves the first, as well as the second and third; and the "capacity" is of God. He has given it to us, and by His power we continue in the possession of it.

The difference between the two systems was that in the Pelagian the *posse* or capacity only was ascribed to grace, while, in the Augustinian, both the *posse* and the *velle* were attributed to God.

(2.) The Pelagians comprehended under the term—it cannot be said inappropriately here—the forgiveness of sins. That

[1] [The answer to (5.) is included in the answer to (1.).]

this was included you may have already perceived from one of the canons (the third or the fourth) of the provincial council: "Whosoever says that the grace of God, whereby a man is justified through Jesus Christ, merely effects the forgiveness of sins already committed, but helps not to avoid sin in the future, let him be anathema." In connection with this point, though this might be remarked under the third head, it may be noticed that the promise and the bestowal of the kingdom of heaven were also included under the word "grace." Of infant baptism, which, as was granted, was no innovation, but agreeable to ancient custom, the Pelagians could give no satisfactory explanation; but, as we have seen, they did not deny the sacramental grace. The rite could not effect or symbolise the washing away of sin. There was no sin, even in the sense of a hereditary proneness to evil, to remit; but the rite was the promise and earnest of the reward of the inheritance; it qualified for the beatific vision, of which the unbaptized would not be accounted worthy. As to adults, neither the forgiveness of sins nor the reward of the inheritance was purely gratuitous. Both were of grace; neither could be claimed as a right; but, at the same time, the idea of human merit was not excluded. Thus the passage in Romans (ix. 15): "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion," was explained as follows: "I will have mercy and compassion on those who, I have foreseen, will by their actions merit mercy and compassion."

(3.) Revelation. Independently of any supernatural revelation, men have in themselves the *possibilitas boni*, but they often do evil, and that they may cease to do it, and may learn to do well, God gave first the law and then the gospel. It is grace when God excites the desire after Himself by disclosure of His character and ways, when He guides us by His counsels, when He encourages us by His promises, and also when He restrains us by His threatenings. But, above all, grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. His teaching and example are peculiarly fitted to touch the heart, and, if we have abused our liberty, to win back our virtue. We ought to give the more earnest heed to this highest revelation, as His first servants, through whom the world has been made

acquainted with His life and doctrine, were endowed with miraculous gifts for the confirmation of the gospel. Those gifts, as well as the communications of heavenly truth which we have received through the apostles, are so many manifestations of grace, vouchsafed to help and to stimulate and encourage us in the practice of virtue.

Now, to speak of the outward revelation as grace is more than excusable: it is scriptural and right. But herein the Pelagians differed from the Augustinians. They would know nothing of the grace that works immediately upon the will, but only of that which works upon and through the understanding. Thus the passage in Phil. ii., "It is God that worketh in us both to will and to do," was explained as meaning: He works in us to will what is good and holy, when, by the greatness of the future glory, and the promise of rewards, He consumes what is offered to our earthly desires; when He excites the prayerful will to longing after God by the revelation of His wisdom; when He counsels us to all goodness. Hence the following canon of the Provincial Council (418): "Whosoever teaches that grace helps us only by bringing us to the knowledge of the Divine will, and not also by working in us the disposition to obey it, let him be anathema."

In a system that taught that all men are born in a state of innocence, and need no *adjutorium gratiæ* ["help of grace"] beyond that which has been above indicated, not only was there no place for the doctrine of predestination as taught by Augustine, but regeneration, except in a very loose sense of the term, and, even in that loose sense, unnecessary for the young, and for a number of adults, was obviously excluded. The Pelagian idea of redemption could not but correspond with the Pelagian idea of grace, or, if you will, with the Pelagian idea of sin. Redemption is not so much the healing and deliverance of corrupt human nature as the elevating, ennobling, and glorifying of beings imperfect, limited, frail, but not depraved, having no proclivities to evil but such as they have acquired, from which they might have kept themselves free. The low view which the Pelagians took of redemption appears from the way in which the familiar idea of the three stages in the Divine education of humanity comes

up in their system. In all the three righteousness was attained. There might indeed be a difference in degree; there might be growing light, as there was deepening shadow. We have, first, the *justitia per naturam*—that attained by many eminent pagans who obeyed the law written on their hearts; secondly, the *justitia per legem*—that attained by Jews who obeyed the law given from heaven (given because sin was increasing): thirdly, the *justitia gratiæ*—that attained by those who follow Christ, the gift of heavenly grace, not indeed the first, but the greatest, example of righteousness. It is not wonderful that Pelagianism, taking such a low view of grace, which implies a low view of the power as well as of the sinfulness of sin, should soon have become extinct. Setting God at a greater distance from us than we are from one another, recognising in ordinary cases no way of access for Him to the soul, except through the creatures of His hand and the events of His providence and a special revelation, it could not satisfy the Christian consciousness of the west. As soon as its real meaning broke through the integument of specious phrases, it was found to be essentially at variance even with the indefinite theology of the east. If it may be said to have revived in later times in a system still further removed from the Catholic faith, but more consistent with itself — in Socinianism, subsequently developed into Unitarianism—yet, even among those who have denied the supreme Divinity of Christ, not a few have formed a different, and, we may say, more religious apprehension of the relation of God to man than that formed by the Pelagians.

The Augustinian idea of grace (Calvinistic), while it presupposes the external supernatural revelation, and the ministry of the word and sacraments, and does not exclude subordinate means, as they are called, comprehends as that which is most essential to it the immediate operation of the Spirit of God upon the soul, and in the case of the elect, influences so powerful and effectual as to make them willing, obedient, stedfast, and to secure the fulfilment of the Divine purpose in their everlasting salvation. Taking it in the specific sense of efficacious grace, you observe:—

(1.) That it is inward. It works under the form, and according to the laws, of our consciousness, moving our

will to faith and obedience. It is indispensable in the beginning, in the prosecution, and in the completion, of the Christian life; it is *gratia præveniens, gratia operans,* and *co-operans,* and *gratia perficiens.* As the first, it prepares the will, imparting a true sense of sin, and desire for redemption. As *gratia operans,* it sets the will free, and directs it toward the Lord, and as *co-operans,* it works with the will which it has itself liberated. As *perficiens* it bestows the *donum perseverantiæ* ["gift of perseverance"] and crowns its work. From first to last the soul lives well only when God works within it what is good. It is the *benedictio dulcedinis* that unites the heart with God, and makes His paths the paths of pleasantness. It sheds abroad in our hearts that love by which, above all, according to Augustine, we are justified. Here is a most important point of difference between Augustine and Luther. Schaff, I think, underrates its importance when he says that, though Augustine substantially identifies justification with sanctification, yet, as he refers this whole process to Divine grace, to the exclusion of all human merit, he stands on essentially evangelical ground. But Augustine does not exactly use the word "justification" as an equivalent for "sanctification." He includes in it the idea of forgiveness at the same time, and, unhappily and inconsistently, makes love, with its works, not only the fruit of Divine grace, but the condition of attaining everlasting salvation. No doubt boasting was excluded as entirely by Augustine as by Paul or by Luther; but such a view of justification naturally begets, as the subsequent history of the Church amply proves, a legal spirit, making our eternal welfare dependent on that which we know to be imperfect, instead of resting it on immovable ground, and so impelling to the obedience of loving and confiding children.

(2.) That it is special. There is, say some, such a thing as *gratia præveniens, operans, perficiens.* It proves itself to be all three in those who obey the Gospel; but in those who obey there is not a more energetic action of God's grace than in those who do not obey: there is no such thing as a discriminative calling of some above others. "A variety in the measures of outward grace is evident; but there is no proof in Holy Scripture that any differ-

ence is made by the Holy Spirit between any two men who are alike subjected to the same measure of outward grace."[1] A little reflection will show that, the God of salvation and the God of providence being the same, the theory does not greatly brighten up the mystery of the apparently inequality of His ways. On any theory, we must still exclaim: "How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out." But Augustine held that, as God acts according to His sovereign pleasure in the distribution of natural gifts, and in the bestowal of outward religious advantages, so also He grants to one a measure of inward grace which He withholds from another. If one man accepts the Gospel and another rejects it, the ultimate ground of the difference between them is to be sought, not in the human, but wholly in the Divine will. Both, it is not denied, may enjoy the common operation of grace, inward as well as outward, and both may grieve, and the second may quench the Spirit, but the first has from God that which the second has not, and which, in the end, secures his salvation. He has special grace. Here there is inequality, but not in the sense of unrighteousness; for, all belonging to the *massa perditionis* ["mass of perdition"], in consequence of Adam's sin, which is also theirs, all might righteously have been left under condemnation, and the deliverance of any is the work and triumph of sovereign mercy. Here it may be noticed that Augustine's doctrine of predestination springs out of his doctrine of universal and total inability, and the consequent need of spiritual grace for salvation. It is not the foundation of his system, but part of the superstructure. As in Gottschalk's case, it presupposes the fall. Augustine was by no means a supralapsarian.

(3.) That it is irresistible. In the Augustinian system, "sufficient" and "efficacious" grace are synonymous expressions. It is really adding nothing to the idea to say that it is irresistible, although the term has a startling and offensive sound, unless we bear in mind, as we ought to, that it is called irresistible just because it overcomes the disposition to resist; it does not retain its subjects against their will, but makes its subjects willing. The

[1] Blunt [*Dictionary of Doctrinal and Historical Theology:* Art. "Grace"].

commonest objection to the doctrine of irresistible grace is thus stated by Blunt: "A will necessarily swayed from without, in whatever direction, is not *free will* at all; the word becomes a *titulus sine re*, without corresponding or intelligible meaning. It is absolutely certain, according to the Calvinistic theory, that the regenerate have not free will."[1] I turn over some fifty pages, and read again: "God's grace is sufficient, but grace, excluding possibility to sin, was neither given to angels in their first creation, nor to man before his fall, but reserved for both, till God be seen face to face in the state of glory."[2] Here, then, we have the consummation of grace, grace not only irresistible so far as it has gone, but bestowed without measure, so that the very possibility of sin is excluded. Is that inconsistent with free-will? Will it be contended that blessed spirits have ceased to be free agents; that in heaven itself—in the state of glory—they have lost that which has often been called heaven's most glorious gift!

(4.) But may not that which is irresistible be withdrawn, so that *gratia præveniens* and *gratia operans* will not become *gratia perficiens?* To this it is answered that, in the case of the elect, grace, while it is inward, special, and irresistible, is also indefectible. The indefectibility is necessarily involved in the Augustinian idea of predestination and election. But it must be confessed that, though theoretically essential, it had not, as taught by him, much practical value; or, as some would prefer to put it, it could not, as taught by him, do much injury. The one thing that belonged to the elect alone was the *donum perseverantiæ*. We cannot certainly know who has this gift; we cannot know before the end whether our neighbour, or whether we ourselves, are of the elect. *Qui cadunt et pereunt in prædestinatorum numero non fuerunt;* Ὁ δὲ ὑπομείνας εἰς τέλος, οὗτος σωθήσεται ["He that endureth to the end, he shall be saved"].

[1] [*Dictionary of Doctrinal and Historical Theology:* Art. "Election."]
[2] [*Ibid.:* Art. "Grace."]

CHAPTER LVI.

AUGUSTINE.

In forming and directing the thought of the Western Church, vastly greater power was exercised by the African triumvirate, Tertullian, Cyprian, and Augustine, than by all the Roman bishops of the early centuries. Of these three the last is beyond dispute the greatest. He stands between Paul and Luther. No one ever adopted more devoutly the language of the former: "By the grace of God I am what I am"; and the attitude taken by the other before the august assembly at Worms, and the language he employed there: "I cannot do otherwise, so help me God!" offer the grandest historical example of true liberty as Augustine conceived it — the liberty that is one with necessity—the *felix necessitas boni.* In all three we may recognise the *prevenient* grace, but in none of them more remarkably than in Augustine. It began, we may say, with his birth (354), at the Numidian town Tagaste, but for fully thirty years it was still only prevenient grace, not *gratia operans.* The memory of his mother runs through his *Confessions,* and we may be sure that her image had followed him, like her prayers, even in his wildest wanderings, and had never suffered his conscience to fall into a deep sleep. The oft-quoted language with which a good bishop once sustained the anxious Monica: "It is impossible that the child of so many tears and supplications should be finally lost," was an expression at once of faith in God's "preventing" grace, and of that love which beareth all things, and believeth all things, and, when there is much evil to bear and little good to believe, hopeth all things. Many storms might pass over the first seeds of piety that had been sown in the heart of the young Aurelius Augustinus, but in due season God would give the increase. So Monica had to wait long for the fulfilment of her most fervent prayers—first in the case

of her husband, Patricius, who became a Christian only a year before his death, and then, after an interval of sixteen or seventeen years, in the case of her son, whose conversion was the chief end for which she desired to live.

In early childhood Augustine not only learned to make the sign of the cross, but was touched with the story of Christ's condescension and love and sufferings. Once—but it was when he was sick—he earnestly besought his mother that he might be baptized. The desire departed with the disease; and, indeed, those about him thought it better that the rite should not be administered, being influenced by the prevalent idea that much might be excused in a child not yet baptized that could not be tolerated in one that was.

At school he certainly did not at first give promise of future greatness. The whole formal side of instruction was repulsive to him. He greatly disliked grammar and arithmetic, and his repugnance to the study of language, *quâ* language, was so great that he never acquired much Greek, and continued all his life ignorant of Hebrew. Notwithstanding these disadvantages, he wrote exegetical works on both Testaments, of which, however, the merit is not in the exegesis. But, while merely formal lessons were painful to him, the concrete quickly interested him, and developed his gifts and sensibilities. Though he afterwards characterised the study of the pagan poets (in a pagan spirit) as a sacrifice offered to fallen angels, Virgil was his delight. From an odious exercise in subtraction, or from a Greek paradigm, he passed as eagerly as if it had been to a game at ball, to the page which told of the wooden horse and the fire of Troy, and the shade of Creusa, and the tears of Dido. Homer, too, he sometimes felt, must have equal charms, but the difficulty of understanding the Greek poured gall over the sweetness.

At the age of fifteen Augustine was sent from Tagaste to a more important school in the neighbouring town Madaura, where, it seems, Christianity had not yet penetrated, or had not taken root. The obscene ceremonies of pagan worship had a most pernicious influence on his ardent African nature, and, when he returned home after a year, it was, according to his own confession, to spend his time in folly and shame and wickedness. The account which he gives of one of his

youthful crimes will recall his explanation, so far as he could carry it, of the first sin. One night, he says, along with some comrades, he plundered a fruit-tree in a neighbour's garden, not because the sweetness of the fruit tempted him, for he might have had better in his father's garden, but simply because it was his will to commit the crime of theft.

On the death of his father, who had been a decurio, and had been by no means rich, a wealthy and generous townsman, named Romanianus, supplemented the insufficient resources of Monica in order that the youth might be enabled to pursue his studies at Carthage, and qualify himself for distinction as a teacher of rhetoric. In the great and luxurious city, though he studied with zeal and was indeed fired with ambition, he became guilty, he tells us, of great profligacy. He joined a society of students who called themselves the *eversores*, "the demolishers"—and shared their way of life—not, however, without expressing at times a secret aversion from the noisy excesses in which he took part. The stage, too, had its powerful attractions for him, but he afterwards pronounced it contrary to truth, nature, and morality.

But even when the flesh was the stronger, the spirit was still warring against it. A woman to whom he proved faithful for thirteen years, but whom he never married, bore him a son, and, under an impulse of piety, he gave the child the name "Adeodatus." In this period also a lost work of Cicero's — his *Hortensius* — fell into his hands, and, notwithstanding its heathenish origin, he acknowledges that it awakened in him the thirst for truth—for the pure truth of which God is the source. In the *Hortensius*, however, he missed the name which his mother taught him to lisp, and which, though he had done so much to undermine early impressions, was still, in a way, dear to him—the name of Christ. He knew what writings testified of Him, and, inspired by the feelings which the earnest page of the Roman had awakened in him, he turned to them once more, after having long neglected them. But they did not please him: the beauty of the Ciceronian was wanting, and he closed the book. In this state of uncertain desires and restlessness, he became acquainted with the Manichæans—fowlers, he called them, who set up their lime-twigs for the unwary, and caught them in the

snares of their dialectics. To the Scriptures and the faith of the Church they had many objections to offer, which at the time appeared to Augustine unanswerable. Their fundamental supposition of two original beings, out of whose conflict the development of the world was derived, offered him a solution of the problem as to the origin of evil, which had already begun to occupy him; but it was a solution that tended only to plunge him deeper in the mire of sinful pollution, since it led him to conceive of evil as something foreign to himself, and imposed upon him without any guilt of his own. Disregarding the entreaties of Monica, he joined the sect, and, though his faith in the Manichæan doctrines was shaken long before he openly renounced them, he continued in those bonds nine years.

Meanwhile he had become a teacher of rhetoric in Carthage, where he had among his scholars Alypius, with whom he formed a lasting and intimate friendship. When he was about to abjure Manichæism openly,[1] he also resolved to leave Carthage for the world's capital, where he hoped to find a sphere suitable to his powers. His mother besought him to remain, or at least to allow her to accompany him; but, feeling her presence burdensome, he deceived her, and set sail, leaving her praying in a chapel near the shore. She prayed, "and," says her son, in one of those striking sentences of which there are so many in his writings, "God refused her what she prayed for then, that He might give her what she prayed for always."

At Rome he fell sick, and, on his recovery, he did not meet with great success as a teacher. He was in darkness. Having abandoned the sect which promised him the knowledge of all things, he was disposed to adopt the philosophy of universal scepticism—to cast himself into the arms of the Academy. But now was drawing nigh the day of redemption for which Monica, his good angel, had prayed, and for which his better self, too, sometimes slumbering, but oftener sighing, had been waiting through many unhappy years. At Milan, to which, through the influence of the prefect Symmachus, he was called from Rome (385) to fill a chair of rhetoric,

[1] He had been an *auditor* all the nine years, but had not become one of the *electi*.

his outward circumstances improved, and he began soon to occupy himself with Neo-platonic writings, which kindled in him an incredible fire, making him feel anew that truth was not inaccessible to man, while, as was needful after the long period during which he had been subjected to Manichæan influence, he began to spiritualise his views. But—what was more important than outward position and philosophical writings—he came in contact with Ambrose.

Augustine was indeed no stranger to the blessed fruits of Christianity. From childhood he had seen the holy image of Jesus reflected in the pure and loving soul of Monica. He knew how the pagans themselves were wont to extol the manners and simplicity of the Christian women and the union and love of Christian families. He knew of the hospitals which Christian charity had erected for the suffering, and the asylums it had opened both for the innocent and for the guilty, and he may have known also of the episcopal dwellings in which oppressed weakness never failed to find a refuge. But he was not long in Milan till in the most celebrated, the most eloquent bishop of the time he saw the power of Christianity as he had never seen it before. Knowing well what manner of life Ambrose led, he went frequently to hear him preach. Attracted by the rhetorical form, he was soon attracted also by the matter. The bishop's discourses inspired him anew with some regard even for the Old Testament, of which the Manichæans spoke with such contempt, and soon he was brought to admit that much could be said for the doctrine of both the Old and the New Testament, which hitherto he had combated.

About this time Monica joined her son, and with new confidence she offered her old prayer that he might be saved. But, even when convinced of the necessity of faith, Augustine had to contend with many doubts and strong passions. Hours of deep melancholy became again more frequent. His health began to suffer. He envied the beggar on the street. From the height of a wild and wooded mountain, he obtained a glimpse of the land of peace, but the way thither was in the midst of lions, and dragons, and deadly foes that lay in ambush, under their leader, the prince of darkness. Heavy-laden, he had heard the voice calling, "Come unto me,"

but the voice was of one far away; he did not yet feel that the Son of Man, who is in heaven, was also near to take his hand and guide his feet.

In the time of his deepest distress Augustine was visited by a friend named Pontilianus, who conversed with him and Alypius (he happened to be present) on the self-denial and consecration of the monastic life in that age, the age of its first love and purity. Deeply moved, he went out into the garden belonging to the house he occupied. He was accompanied by Alypius, and took with him the letters of Paul. Silently he reviewed the past with bitter self-reproach; then, leaving his friend, and casting himself down under a fig-tree, he poured out his heart with tears, praying for God's mercy. Suddenly he heard a child's voice coming from a neighbouring house and singing *Tolle, lege*—"Take up and read." Accepting the words as a direction from heaven, he returned to Alypius, seized and opened the book which he had left by him, and read: "Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." Alypius took up the book and began where Augustine had stopped: "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye." For both the hour of decision had struck. Their old friends, the pleasant vices, which had already proved the whips to scourge them, were ended as they were once more, as Augustine puts it, "lovingly tugging at the garment of the flesh, and saying, 'Can it be, then, that we are to part for ever?'" Their power was expelled by a stronger affection. Grace, long *prævenions*, was now *operans*. The two friends hastened to Monica to tell how it was with them, and when she learned that her son had not only become a Christian, but had resolved to consecrate his whole life to Christ, she devoutly thanked the God who had answered her exceeding abundantly above what she had asked or thought. In the following year (387), Augustine, his son Adeodatus, and his friend Alypius, were baptized by Ambrose on Easter Eve.[1]

[1] "I have loved Thee late, Thou Beauty, so old and so new; I have loved Thee late! And lo! Thou wast within, and I was without, and was seeking Thee there."

In autumn of the same year he returned to Africa, carrying with him a holy legacy of grief and love for his mother, who had left her home for his sake, and who, having seen her chief desire more than fulfilled, departed in peace at Ostia. After reaching his native shore, he spent some years, not, indeed, in the cell of a hermit, but in retirement and study, and continued to write, as he had begun to do at Milan, against false philosophy and Manichæism. Already famous as an author, he was made presbyter at Hippo Regius (Bona) in 391, and in 395 he was elected Bishop.[1] He lived with his clergy in one house, where all things were in common, and thus, it has been said, "became unwittingly the founder of the Augustinian order, which gave the reformer Luther to the world."[2] His beneficent, many-sided, extraordinary activity won him a name which, it seems, remains in use to this day among the natives of Bona—"the great Christian."

Augustine was a true student. In his *Confessions*, the greatest of all autobiographies, do we learn that, great sinner as he was, there weighed upon his soul the depressing recollection that he had been in a state of mental torpor when such torpor is most unnatural, and had irrecoverably lost the most precious years of his life? That was by no means the case. If he sank as deeply as any of his companions in the mire of sinful pollutions—if he was not less addicted than any of them to those pleasant vices of which he speaks, he surpassed them all in the insatiable zeal with which he devoted himself to the acquisition of knowledge. He was not a Christian—not even a nominal Christian—but the unbaptized Augustine would have scorned to be a merely nominal student. And not only so, but, at his lowest depths, he was never wholly without noble aspirations after goodness as well as after truth. He was neither a mean nor an insolent young man. Those are epithets which you would no more think of applying to him than you would of applying them to Paul or to Luther, between whom he stands, confessedly the grandest figure in the history of the fifteen

[1] For a while he was colleague to Valerius, though this was contrary to the laws of the Church. Alypius was made Bishop of Tagaste.

[2] Schaff [vol. iii., p. 994.] But Augustine was rather the founder of the so-called canonical life, though he did much to promote monastic life properly so-called.

centuries that intervened. Far be it from any of us to suggest that God could not have glorified His grace in the conversion of Augustine and called him as he sat under the fig-tree though he had been both base and slothful; but, had that been his character, it would have needed more than a miracle of grace to make him what he became to the Church of his own and of every succeeding age. Augustine did more than learn. One may learn, and learn not a little, without ever becoming really a student. The ability to give a statement of facts, and doctrines, and arguments, and decisions, no more constitutes the student than the ability to repeat an alphabet or to conjugate a verb. The true student, of course, will be the last to despise what he knows to be indispensable —he cannot study without learning—but he is more than a learner. He is a fellow-worker with the men he reads and the men he hears. He weighs in their significance and relations—sometimes in relations that have not occurred to the teacher—the facts and tenets and reasons that are in his head; he takes a living and keen interest in them, forms his own judgment concerning them, and draws his own conclusions from them. Every true student is what Augustine was in a degree so remarkable and pre-eminent—a thinker—and so his field is boundless.

Augustine's power as a preacher was due, not to any display of the vast stores of secular learning which we know him to have possessed, or to rhetorical arts, from which, though he had been a teacher of rhetoric, he was singularly free, but to his deep knowledge of Scripture, which he studied, ever grasping, and never merely groping, and to his lofty enthusiasm and rich emotional nature, as well as to his weight of character and his fervent prayers. His power, due to so rare a combination, is attested by undeniable facts. We read, indeed, that, when called to be a presbyter at Hippo Regius, the man of God wept in the presence of the congregation from a sense of his utter unworthiness and unfitness. His tears were misinterpreted, however. Many believed that they were shed because he was called to be only a presbyter, and not a bishop, and he was told for his comfort and encouragement that he might attain to the higher office in due time. On two subsequent occasions, we read of congregations

weeping, and what occurred on these occasions gives the best possible evidence that his was, to use his own phrase, no *insipiens eloquentia*, by which he meant a generally attractive but, to him, detestable eloquence (so-called), which adorned no body of Divine truth, and, indeed, no substance of any kind, but that on which he was wont to insist, and which he constantly cultivated—the eloquence which has for its aim *ut veritas pateat, ut veritas placeat, ut veritas maneat*—"that the truth may be understood, loved, retained." He once preached at Cæsarea in Mauritania against a vicious custom called "caterva," which had prevailed for generations, and which he thus describes: "It was not fellow-citizens merely, but neighbours, brothers, fathers and sons even, who, divided into two factions, and armed with stones, fought annually at a certain season of the year for several days continuously, every one killing whomsoever he could." Now, what was the effect of the sermon he directed against this deeply-rooted savage custom? "At first," he says, "the people applauded me;" but he was accustomed to such applause, and "therefore I felt that I had made no real impression. I changed my tone and style, and they began to weep; then I was sure that they were penitent, and that the custom would be abolished; and I thanked God, for so it was. Eight years have now passed and that custom has not been revived."

The other occasion on which we read of the congregation weeping, Augustine the preacher weeping along with them and so ending his discourse, was when he preached against another custom which had grown up in North Africa, a custom hardly less deplorable than the "caterva." This was the honouring of saints and martyrs on the days devoted to their commemoration, by riotous festivities at their graves.[1] "It was not my tears," he says, "that called forth theirs, but when they

[1] [Gregory Thaumaturgus "increased the devotion of the people everywhere by instituting festive meetings in honour of those who had fought for the faith. The bodies of the martyrs were distributed in different places, and the people assembled and made merry, as the year came round, holding festival in their honour. . . . He allowed them to be merry, jovial, and gay at the monuments of the Holy Martyrs." "The people," says Newman, commenting on this extract from the *Vita Thaumaturgi*, "were in fact eventually reclaimed from their gross habits by his indulgent policy, a successful issue which could not have followed an accommodation to what was sinful."—*Development of Doctrine*, p. 373.]

began to weep, I could not abstain, and ended my discourse in the fullest hope of their amendment." It may be pardonable to notice by the way that though the *dolor* (grief) began with the speaker, the *fletus* (weeping) began with the audience —*Si vis me flere, dolendum est Primum ipsi tibi.*[1]

It is unnecessary to say that permanent impressions were often made on individual hearers by a preacher at whose voice even whole districts were, by the blessing of God, delivered from deeply-rooted vice. Men listened with reverence to Augustine when he exhorted to temperance and godliness. The most cynical of hearers might listen with respect and patience when, in words that came burning from the burning heart, he was exhorted to deeds of generosity and self-denial.

Augustine himself, in simple but weighty words, exhorts the preacher, and especially the young preacher, to a holy life if he would not lay himself open to contempt, and if he would exercise his calling with the greatest profit to his audience. Speaking of those who follow their own courses, but are prevented by the seat they occupy from preaching their own doctrine, he says: "Now these men do good to many by preaching what they themselves do not perform: but they would do good to very many more if they lived as they preached. For there are numbers who seek an excuse for their own evil lives in comparing the teaching with the conduct of their instructors, and say in their own hearts, or even go a little further, and say with their lips: 'Why do you not do yourself what you bid me do?' And thus they cease to listen with submission to the man who does not listen to himself, and, in despising the preacher, they learn to despise the word that is preached. Wherefore the apostle, writing to Timothy, after telling him, 'Let no man despise thy youth,' adds immediately the course by which he would avoid contempt: 'But be thou an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.'"

If the end of preaching were merely to impart instruction, the life of the speaker would be comparatively of little importance, but Augustine never lost sight of its true and

[1] ["If you wish me to weep, you must first be in grief yourself."—Horace, *Ars Poetica*, l. 102.]

highest end. Happily it has been made a matter of discussion, and happily, also, it is impossible for any of us to bring the discussion to an end, whether his tendency in his discourses was rather to the doctrinal or to the practical. Though the contrary has often been maintained, there was nothing in his system to prevent him from being practical, but the marvel is that the most speculative of divines, though he could not help at times entering on investigations that lay somewhat beyond the horizon of his hearers, and though at times he allegorises in a manner for which he has been justly reproached, and in which he compares unfavourably with the great Christian orator of the east, yet continually gravitates towards the relations of common life, and, in terse, vigorous, and frequently fiery words, urges to the discharge of common duties.

Sometimes, though not often, you will find Augustine, like Chrysostom, to whom I have just alluded, designated an orator; and whether that term be fittingly applied or not to a man who, as a thinker and theologian, rose to an intellectual and spiritual primacy, in which he has had no successor, at least in the mediæval Church, he was assuredly, in another sense, an orator, and in memorable words he counsels every preacher to be an orator: *Ante sit orator quam dictor.* That he was himself in the general and in the particular sense. He was a *man of prayer* before he preached.

Augustine's polemical writings were directed chiefly against the dualism of the Manichæans, the separatism of the Donatists, and the rationalism of the Pelagians. His great apologetic work, the *De Civitate Dei*, in twenty-two books, was begun in 413, and completed about three years before his death. It was undertaken because, on the capture of Rome (410) and the plundering of Italy, the heathen driven to foreign lands, not a few of them to Africa, maintained that the terrible calamities which had befallen the capital and the surrounding country, had been caused by the wrath of the gods at the rejection of the ancient religion.

The *Confessions* were published in 400, and the *Retractations* in 427. The former contains an acknowledgment of his sins; the latter, an acknowledgment of his errors, so far as he had discovered them. In addition to his sermons

and a vast number of letters, he composed ninety-three books or tractates, more or less extensive. Among the memorable and portable sentences with which his writings abound, some of the most familiar are the following: *Da quod jubes et jube quod vis; Fides præcedit intellectum; Novum Testamentum in vetere latet, vetus in novo patet; Distingue tempora et concordabit scriptura; Nulla infelicitas frangit quem felicitas nulla corrumpit.*" To him also is ascribed the famous *Cogito ergo sum*, which with Descartes became the starting-point of modern philosophy.

To what extent Augustine's theological system was determined by his own personal experience—imperfectly understood, say some, and hastily generalised—whether he was influenced mainly by that which was becoming, if it had not already become, the dogma of the Church, and, in its interest, sought to lay mankind in helpless misery at the feet of the priest—how far he troubled the stream of Catholic tradition, or allowed himself to be carried away by the stream already turbid: these are questions on which I cannot now enter, and which hardly any one discusses without showing a strong, though, it may be, unconscious bias.

As to influence over the Western Church, Augustine holds a place perfectly unique. Not so eloquent as Ambrose, and by no means so learned as Jerome, he won by his acute, comprehensive, original mind, and by the riches of his emotional nature and of his Christian experience, a vast influence over the ancient Church—an influence which was retained in the mediæval, and cannot be said to have been lost in the modern Church. From his vast treasures drew scholastics and mystics, the reformers before and the reformers after the Reformation. Jansenism, the most remarkable phenomenon in the history of the Roman Catholic Church from the days of Luther, was but a reproduction of Augustine's doctrine. The name of Calvin is not more honoured by Calvinists than is his, and many to whom Calvinism is odious speak with wonder and reverence of Augustine's capacious mind and sanctified heart. The brand plucked from the burning gives light and heat through the centuries.

Abundant in labours, unrivalled in influence, he was the humblest of men. No one has called his *Confessions* the

cloak of vanity. They were written, in fact, because he felt that all that he was and did was to be ascribed to God, and was impatient and indignant at being made the victim of exaggerated, and, to him, most painful panegyric. During his last illness—it was a dark time for his country, and the city which he has made famous was besieged by the Vandals—the chief reading of the great Christian was the penitential psalms, passages of which were suspended from the wall beside his dying-bed. He felt as our own reformer felt when some were trying to soften his couch by recalling the great things he had done for Christ and His Church. "My prayer," said Knox—and Grotius, too, had offered it—is still that of the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner"; and Augustine, like him whom he studied so devoutly—the apostle who laboured more abundantly than all the rest—offers an illustration of the words: "It is the branches that are heaviest with fruit that bend lowest." He died on August 20th, 430, aged seventy-six. Humbly, trustfully, as, when a child, he lay in the arms of her who, of all that lived since the days of the Saviour, is blessed among women, he committed himself to the arms of God, and so entered into the perfect rest. *Fecisti nos ad te*, he had written at the beginning of the *Confessions: et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te* ["Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they rest in Thee"]. Towards the end he says: *Tu, Domine, semper operaris et semper requiescis* ["Thou, Lord, ever workest and ever art at rest"]. And how is such rest to be obtained? The last words of the *Confessions* are: *A te petatur, in te quæratur, ad te pulsetur: sic, sic accipietur, sic invenietur, sic aperietur. Amen.*[1]

[1] ["Of Thee let it be asked, in Thee let it be sought, at Thee let it knock: thus, thus will it be received, thus will it be found, thus will it be opened. Amen."]

CHAPTER LVII.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE DOCTRINE OF PAPAL SUPREMACY.

In one of our monthly periodicals, an article appeared in October from the pen of Cardinal Newman, entitled "The Development of Religious Error."[1] It was called forth by an article in the same review by Principal Fairbairn, which appeared in May, and of which the Cardinal was himself the subject. Which of the two writers has done the other least injustice, it would be unwarrantable to pronounce without entering on a number of questions which it would be unsuitable, and indeed impossible, to discuss on an occasion like the present. This, at least, would not be denied by Principal Fairbairn, and will not be denied by any of us: that the Cardinal illustrates his subject justly and forcibly when he speaks of the false doctrines that naturally spring from low views on the demerit and doom of sin, and when he shows how such views may affect, and, to a great extent, must affect, our conceptions of the character of God, and of the Atonement and Person of Christ. But, on the other hand, as we are reminded by no one more frequently than by Cardinal Newman, to the development of religious error—what he considers such, and in part rightly—is mainly due the development of Catholic dogma, including what most Protestants, along with all Catholics, recognise as a correct and authoritative expression of Christian truth. I say mainly, not solely; for, not to speak of other exceptions, we have a notable one in the dogma of the Treasure, invented for the justification of the infamous abuse that caused Luther to publish his ninety-five theses. But in the early centuries, at all events, heretical opposition to the truth led, and led necessarily, to the development of Catholic dogma. To take

[1] [*Contemporary Review*, Oct. 1885. This lecture was delivered on a special occasion. It stands here as it was written.]

the first and most obvious illustration, Athanasius and Arius both affirmed that Christ was God, both professed to receive the Scripture testimony concerning Him, but there was no hiding and no healing of the vital difference between them; the Church was compelled to assert the supreme and essential Divinity of the Son in language that it was impossible for Arius or for Arianizers to accept. But though, in recording the results of the Arian and other controversies in the Early Church, Protestant writers for the most part—not universally—have little hesitation in speaking of the development of "*Christian doctrine*," using this expression and "Catholic dogma" as interchangeable, it is necessary to remember that what was gained, or aimed at, in the doctrinal decisions of the Church was not the promulgation of truths which had newly dawned upon the mind of theological inquirers, but the precise and unambiguous statement of truths that were not only implicitly but consciously believed, and that were openly confessed and everywhere published, though frequently in terms that were not perfectly clear and exact, and that it was not difficult to misunderstand, or to wrest, in a heretical sense. Now, compare the development of the dogma of papal supremacy. The importance of the dogma from a historical point of view cannot be exaggerated. To Cardinal Newman it is much more than *one* of the fundamental dogmas of the faith. "The essence of conscience," he says in the "Development of Christian Doctrine" is the essence of natural religion, the supremacy of Apostle, or Pope, or Church, or Bishop, is the essence of revealed; and when such external authority is taken way, the mind falls back again of necessity upon that inward guide which it possessed even before revelation."[1] The august prerogative of the Catholic Church, which is thus represented as the essence of revealed religion, and of which the apostles were in the first instance the organs, is next assigned to bishops, and, lastly, to the bishop of bishops. But how did the transmission and the transference take place? We read at pages 67 and 68 of the "Development of Christian Doctrine" that, while it is certain that the development of revelation proceeded all through the Old Dispensation, down to the very end of our Lord's ministry, on the other

[1] [P. 86 (1885).]

hand, if we turn to the beginnings of apostolical teaching after His ascension, we shall find ourselves unable to fix a historical point at which the growth of doctrine ceased, and the rule of faith was once for all settled—not on the day of Pentecost, for St. Peter had still to learn at Joppa that he was to baptize Cornelius; not at Joppa and Cæsarea, for St. Paul had to write his epistles; not on the death of the last apostle, for St. Ignatius had to establish the doctrine of episcopacy. Unquestionably the author is justified in holding that the doctrine of the episcopacy is not established by anything written before the death of the last apostle. Equally is he in the right when he admits that a long period elapsed before the prerogative of the Bishop of Rome was ascertained and recognised. He writes (pp. 150 and 151): "The *regalia Petri* might sleep, as the power of the chancellor has slept; not as obsolete, for they never had been carried into effect, but as a mysterious privilege which was not understood; as an unfulfilled prophecy. For St. Ignatius to speak of popes when it was a matter of bishops, would have been like sending an army to arrest a housebreaker." . . . "When the Church was thrown upon her own resources, first local disturbances gave exercise to bishops, and next ecumenical disturbances gave exercise to popes; and whether communion with the pope was necessary to Catholicity, would not and could not be debated till a suspension of that communion had actually occurred. It is not a greater difficulty that St. Ignatius does not write to Asian Greeks about popes, than that St. Paul does not write to the Corinthians about bishops. And it is a less difficulty that the Papal supremacy was not formally acknowledged in the second century, than that there was no formal acknowledgment on the part of the Church of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity till the fourth."

That an author whose discriminating faculty is not the least of his remarkable gifts, should have written such a sentence as the last I have quoted, it is difficult to understand. His mention of the second century in this connection is no doubt to be accounted for by the circumstance that he has just been speaking of, and is still thinking of, Ignatius, who does not write about popes any more than Paul writes about bishops. But suppose Ignatius had written about popes,

exalting them as highly above other bishops as he exalts bishops above presbyters; that would have been only the acknowledgment of an individual writer, and would not have been a formal acknowledgment on the part of the Church of the papal supremacy comparable with the acknowledgment of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, which was made by the decision of the first ecumenical council. Cardinal Newman knows very well that no formal acknowledgment of even the precedence of the Bishop of Rome was made either in the second or in the third century, and that indeed the formal acknowledgment of the papal supremacy in the awful amplitude of meaning in which that expression is now understood, was not made for more than fifteen centuries after the Council of Nice.

But, after all, the question as to the time which the process of development took in the one case and in the other is of only subordinate importance. There is a more serious and more vital objection, which will be anticipated, and which, indeed, has already been hinted in the sentence: "It is a less difficulty that the papal supremacy was not formally acknowledged in the second century, than that there was no formal acknowledgment on the part of the Church of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity till the fourth." There might be no dogma before the fourth—no authoritative declaration and definition by the universal Church of the faith concerning the Three-one God. But was the doctrine itself new? Was not the dogma the expression of that which had been surely believed from the beginning? Ignatius knows nothing of a pope, but does he know nothing of the Divine Redeemer? What, indeed, most strikes the reader who goes to his pages without any polemical interest is not his championship of the episcopate, but the fervent devotion—some would say the extravagance at times—with which he expresses his love and adoration for Christ, his God. Paul, it is admitted, has nothing to say of bishops as distinct from presbyters, still less of the authority of one bishop over other bishops, but, even if we were to grant to Cardinal Newman and others—what we are far from granting—that Scripture was intended, not to teach doctrines, but only to prove them, there is no believer in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity whose faith is not abundantly confirmed

by passages in the writings of the Apostle of the Gentiles. It is not pretended that any confirmation whatever of the doctrine of the papal supremacy can be found either in Ignatius or in Paul. It may at once be conceded, however, that about the time of Ignatius there began to be felt, in some parts of the world at least, the need of an outward authority, not, indeed, superior to the Scriptures, but capable of pronouncing with decisive voice as to the sense in which the Church had understood, and ought to understand, the revelation which had been given in the Scriptures; and it was maintained that the organ through which the authoritative voice was uttered was the bishop. True or false, this was a novelty. As little as in Paul or in Clement or in Barnabas, can we find any trace of it in the recently discovered work: *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles.* In that ancient document we read only of the two orders of localised ministers, and these elected by the people. What is still more important here, this work, while it enjoins the duty of submission to the Word of God, at the same time recognises the right of private judgment as to what is in accordance with the Word, and inculcates its exercise. This it does plainly, particularly at the beginning of the eleventh chapter. Nothing can be further from the absolute subjection which Ignatius enjoins to bishops as, in a special and immediate sense, the bearers of the Divine Spirit—the representatives of God and Christ.

But the new doctrine could not long survive its author. For, let it be observed, it is not correct to say, though it has been said a thousand times, that Ignatius established *the* doctrine of the episcopate. It may be doubted whether we are warranted in formulating a doctrine out of earnest and unqualified exhortation. As might easily be shown, his peculiar view of the episcopate was soon found to be untenable, and probably it has not been held by anyone for more than six centuries, so that, whether the doctrine of an infallible Church be sound or not, we see here a considerable amount of religious error in the process of its development. Lamentable facts, and one notable fact in the apostolic see of Antioch itself, soon showed that official position in the Church did not necessarily prove as walls and bulwarks against heresy

any more than against vice. And equally certain is it that the absolute authority which does not belong to the individual bishop cannot be ascribed to the bishops collectively—to councils, even ecumenical councils. It is not now claimed for them by any man, except in so far as their decisions have been sanctioned by the pope. But since the idea of an infallible authority somewhere in the Church was widely cherished, and seemed to be justified by Christ's promise of the Spirit, which, however, was grievously misunderstood, there grew up slowly and surely a tendency to seek in the bishop of bishops—in Rome—the centripetal force which was not only to keep good Catholics within reach of the saving hearing of heavenly truths, but to prevent us, who are heretics, from wandering so wildly, and vanishing so quickly, into the blackness of darkness as we should otherwise do. Of the unhesitating confidence with which Roman Catholic writers interpret Christ's promise of the Spirit of truth, and at once apply it, as they interpret it, to the Pope, I need give only one example. A French writer, who has, I believe, been widely read, tells us that while, among the main causes of the progress of the Reformation, in the days of its youthful vigour, were those stated by Frederick the Great: self-interest in Germany, lust in England, and the love of novelty in France, yet Luther drew after him a multitude of *bona fide* partisans, who showed lamentable confusion of mind in failing to discern between discipline and doctrine, and to consider that the Lord promised that His true Church should be distinguished, not by the perfect sanctity of its members, but by the perfect purity of its creed. He promised to preserve it, not from scandals, but from errors. Had those *bona fide* followers of Luther understood this, "they would have seen that the true virginity of the Catholic Church has been preserved inviolate in the most polluted hands, being in no wise dependent on the character of a pope, of his court, or of his age." Waiving many important questions which such language raises, I confine myself to a brief account of the development of the doctrine of the papal supremacy—an example, as we believe, of the development of religious error.

Reminding you of the admission that, in the early centuries, the very conception of a pope in the specific sense was un-

known equally with the name, I have to remind you all that, long before the conception was formed and the name, in the specific sense, given, a certain superiority of position and influence was acknowledged to belong to the Bishop of Rome. What, then, were some of the causes that led to the elevation of his see—that elevation which it had reached at the time of the early ecumenical councils, and which prepared the way for the wide and durable supremacy of later ages? It is fair, however, and may not be superfluous, to remark at the outset that, supposing the secondary causes we could assign—more or less of an external and worldly, more or less of a moral and spiritual nature—appeared an adequate explanation of the result, we are not warranted to draw the conclusion that the prerogatives claimed for the Bishop of Rome do not belong to him by a *jus divinum*—a *jus divinum* grounded on the words of the Lord Himself, which long remained obscure, but on which history eventually shed a flood of light. The secondary causes, it may be argued, were prearranged and overruled so as to make the Bishop of Rome *de facto*, what he was from the beginning *de jure*. But, on the other hand, if we hold that Scripture, far from establishing, furnishes ample ground for denying, the *jus*, it is the more incumbent on us to give some rational explanation of the *factum*.

1. To the question, "How came it to pass that the chief pastor in Rome—a man whose calling it was to preach and catechise and dispense the sacraments—became lord over his brethren and lord over kings?" The brief answer has sometimes been given: "Because Rome was Rome." This may not say all, but it says much. It did not indeed follow necessarily from the vast political importance of the city, that the bishop would take a corresponding rank and position in the Church; but, when the Church came to regard bishops as distinct from, and exalted above, presbyters, and those higher ministers as no longer possessed of equal rights, but one invested with authority over many, it is manifest that the path to power lay more open to the occupant of the Roman see than to any of his brethren. More easily would he become *primus inter pares*, and sooner in his case than in any other would the *inter pares* be dropped. To be bishop in the ancient capital which gave laws to the nations, to hold this

office, at all events, in an age when not only slaves, and women, and artisans, but a considerable number of rich and wise and mighty belonged to the Church, was an imposing distinction which, it is of consequence to notice, was œcumenically recognised sooner than the spiritual descent from Peter, and the succession to the primacy which that Apostle was alleged to have received from the Lord Himself. The place of honour next to the Bishop of Rome was assigned by ancient councils to the Bishop of Constantinople, because his see was the new Rome, and certainly the bishops of the two capitals, old and new, found multitudes prepared to submit to claims which, announced by others, would have been pronounced arrogant and intolerable.

2. A second cause of the elevation of the Roman See was the high reputation acquired by the Roman Church in early times. To that faith for which Paul gave thanks, and which was spoken of throughout the whole world, the Church of Rome added "virtue" (ἀρετή). The blood of the martyrs, of whom not a few were bishops, consecrated the soil of that city which stood so high in dignity as the seat of imperial power. Further, the faith and virtue by which, from early times, the converts of the capital were distinguished, were crowned by brotherly kindness and charity. Before a long period had elapsed from the foundation of the Church, the Roman Christians had the ability, of which it is attested they made a generous use, to contribute to the necessities of their brethren in other churches, especially in times of calamity and persecution. Special honour was naturally accorded to the chief minister of a church that abounded with this grace —that was adorned with many crowns won on the spot of greatest peril as of greatest eminence.

3. The personal obscurity of the bishops of Rome during the early centuries was another cause of the elevation of the Roman see. No one, indeed, will affirm that they were destitute of the capacity for government. As some Roman Catholic writers put it, it was a providential circumstance that the successors of St. Peter were assigned their place in Rome, where there had been produced in the inhabitants a practical instinct such as had appeared nowhere else. At the same time, living at the great centre where all the threads

of human intercourse met, the Bishop had opportunities that no other enjoyed for acquiring information as to the state of conviction and feeling throughout the Christian world, and so, when controversial questions were submitted to him, perceiving what judgment he ought to pronounce if he would be in harmony with the general consciousness of the Church. But, while this is true, there is not, among the twenty-nine successors of Peter enumerated by Eusebius, one who can be compared even with an Irenæus; and it is not difficult to understand how this comparative obscurity conduced eventually to the establishment of the prodigious power which now belongs to the Pope. "The earlier pontiffs," says Milman, "were men who of themselves commanded no great authority, and awoke no jealousy. Rome had no Origen, no Athanasius, no Ambrose. The names of none of the popes, down to Leo and Gregory the Great, appear among the distinguished writers of Christendom. This more cautious and retired dignity was no less favourable to their earlier power than to their later claim of infallibility. If more stirring and ambitious men, they might have betrayed to the civil power the secret of their aspiring hopes; if they had been voluminous writers, in the more speculative times, before the Christian creed had assumed its more definite and coherent form, it might have been more difficult to assert their unimpeachable orthodoxy."

Cardinal Newman is far from denying the fact on which Dean Milman reasons thus. On the contrary, he guards against an unduly high estimate even of Leo and Gregory the Great. In the *Apologia* (p. 265) we read: "It is individuals and not the Holy See, that have taken the initiative, and given the lead to the Catholic mind, in theological inquiry. Indeed, it is one of the reproaches urged against the Roman Church, that it has originated nothing, and has only served as a sort of *remora* or break in the development of doctrine. And it is an objection which I really embrace as a truth; for such I conceive to be the main purpose of its extraordinary gift. It is said, and truly, that the Church of Rome possessed no great mind in the whole period of persecution. Afterwards, for a long while, it has not a single doctor to show; St. Leo, its first, is the teacher of one point of doctrine; St.

Gregory, who stands at the very extremity of the first age of the Church, has no place in dogma or philosophy. The great luminary of the western world, is, as we know, St. Augustine; he, no infallible teacher, has formed the intellect of Christian Europe; indeed to the African Church generally we must look for the best early exposition of Latin ideas. Moreover, of the African divines, the first in order of time, and not the least influential, is the strong-minded and heterodox Tertullian." Of course the Cardinal does not argue from the facts in the same way as the Dean. His object, which he pursues at considerable length, is to show that the infallible authority cannot be said to have destroyed the energy of the Catholic intellect. The utmost, however, that he succeeds in proving is that the infallible authority did not destroy the energy of the Catholic intellect so long as it was not recognised or not exercised. What he writes neither meets the objection to Catholic authority which he seeks to refute, nor militates against the contention that the personal obscurity of the early bishops of Rome contributed to the elevation of their see.

4. I shall mention only one more cause of this elevation —the development of legend. The legend of Peter helped the doctrine of papal supremacy, and the development of the one tended to the development of the other. Whether you believe that Peter ever visited Rome or not, you probably regard all you read of his episcopate and the transmission of his authority to his successor in the same light as you do the mythical narrative of the founder of the city; but the fiction came to be generally accepted, and prepared the way for acquiescence in the vastest claims. Addition after addition was made. For instance, legend did more for the exaltation of Leo the Great than that *Epistola Dogmatica* to which Cardinal Newman refers as throwing light on one point of doctrine. The rumour spread, and was believed, that when that bishop prevailed upon Attila, the scourge of God, and his terrible army of Huns to retire, Peter and Paul hovered over him with threatening swords. This may be no more to us than the similar legend of Castor and Pollux, or of Hercules and Hebe; but the story came to be accepted as literally true, and shadows, as they have often struck terror into the soul, have often inspired it with confidence, more than the substance of

ten thousand soldiers. Such legends must be taken into account as having not only expressed but strengthened the feelings and convictions which shaped the course of history.

In accounting for the development of the doctrine of the papal supremacy, I have confined myself to causes that were already in operation in the early Church, but what has been said may help us to understand how, in the language of the late Earl Russell, the "Church of Rome, which had alternately crept humbly under the negligence and indifference, or been tormented by the persecution and cruelty of the pagan Emperors, rose slowly from the ground, trying her wings cautiously, till she perched on the roofs of palaces, and crowed from the pinnacles of temples her loud note of triumph."[1]

I have considered in the light of the early history of the Church the development of the doctrine of the papal supremacy and infallibility, about which, indeed, the articles of Principal Fairbairn and Cardinal Newman mainly turn. On the scriptural argument for the primacy the Cardinal lays little stress; and as for the theological argument on which he does lay stress—the argument from the doctrine of Providence, which is as old as Augustine at least, in whom it is used in favour of the dogma of an infallible Church—it is wrecked against stubborn facts, like the reasoning of those orthodox theologians who maintained *a priori* that there could not possibly be various readings in the manuscripts of the sacred text. These are topics on which I do not dwell.

Let me say, in conclusion, that more important than the development of dogma is the application—the personal application—of Christian truth, Christian principles and doctrines. Cardinal Newman somewhere says that, when he looks into the world, and does not behold God reflected in it, it gives him a shock such as he would feel if he looked into a mirror and did not see his own face.[2] If that is said of the world without God, what of the Church, of its ministers, and of those who aspire to become its ministers? If we are not shocked at the very idea of a godless ministry, thousands who

[1] [*History of the Christian Religion in the West of Europe*, p. 80.]
[2] [*Apologia pro Vitâ Sud*, p. 241.]

know only a corrupt Christianity will rise in the day of judgment and condemn us. The highest and best of all developments is that we be changed "from glory to glory," into the image of Him who said: "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father"—that we grow up in all things unto Him who is the Head, and the sole Head, of His body, the Church.

INDEX.

A

Abra, 394.
Abraxas, 180.
Absorption, 501.
Acacius, 389.
Acephali, 544.
Adeodatus, 594.
Adrumetum, 573.
Ægæ, 332.
Ælia Capitolina, 135.
Æons, 182.
Ætius, 389.
Agapæ, 120.
Agladius, 255.
Alaric, 450.
Alexander of Jerusalem, 290.
Alexander of Alexandria, 370.
Alexander of Constantinople, 385.
Alexandria, 35, 275.
Allegory, 37, 296.
Alogi, 209, 351.
Alypius, 421.
Alypius, 595.
Ambrose, 63, 429, 434, 457, 563, 596.
Ambrose, 294.
Ammianus Marcellinus, 389, 417, 419, 422, 424.
Anacletus, 107.
Anicentius, 388.
Anicetus, 150.
Antitheses, 186.
Antoninus Pius, 136.
Anthusa, 496.
Apamea, 488.
Aphaka, 332.
Apocalypse, 98.
Apollinaris, 158.
Apollinarius, 504.
Apollonius, 211.
Apologists, 149, 157, 252.
Apostles, 100.
Arbogast, 433.
Arcadius, 443.
Archelaus, 48.
Archon, 180.
Arianism, 349.
Arians, 375, 389.
Ariminum, Synod of, 390.
Aristides, 158.
Aristobulus, 36.
Aristophanes, 8.
Aristotle, 11.
Arius, 363, 367, 385.
Arkesilaus, 13.
Arles, Synods of, 339, 388.
Armenians, 553.
Arnuphis, 152.
Artemon, 352.
Artotyrites, 209.
Asceticism, 39, 40, 203, 287.
Athanasians, 376, 389.
Athanasius, 376, 384.
Attalus, 451.
Augustine, 344, 441, 508, 592, 461.
Augustus, 17, 47.
Aurelian, 234.
Aurelius, Marcus, 137.
Auxentius, 458.

B

Babylas, 230.
Babylas, 423.
Baptism, 163, 251, 339.
  of Jesus, 180.
  required of heathens, 449.
Barbarians, invasion of, 449.
Barcochba, 135.
Bardesanes, 185.
Basilides (Gnostic), 179.
Basilides (Martyr), 215.
Basilides (Bishop), 269.
Basilina, 407.
Basiliscus (Brother of Leo I.), 494.
Basiliskus (Church of), 544.
Baur, 26, 31, 125, 172, 312, 320, 325, 365, 404, 412, 502.
Bernard, St., 301.
Beryllus, 361.
Bethar, 135.
Biblias, 153.
Blandina, 155.

Blunt, J. H., 31, 473, 515, 590.
Blunt, J. J., 99, 101, 216, 228, 242, 279.
Bothurius, 464.
Brethren, the Tall, 483.
Buildings, Church, 130, 224, 234, 332, 397.
  destroyed, 438.
Burrhus, 80.

C

Cæcilianus, 336.
Cæcilius, 256.
Cainites, 185.
Caledonians, 220.
Candidian, 516.
Caracalla, 221.
Carneades, 13.
Cassian, 573.
Cataphrygians, 200.
Catechumens, 276.
Catholicity, 196.
Celibacy, 203, 381.
Celsus, 293, 299.
Cerdo, 185.
Cerinthus, 70, 92, 97.
Chalcedon, Ecumenical Council of, 539.
Chaldean Christians, 521.
Chapters, The Three, 549.
Chasidim, 21.
Chiliasm, 97, 202.
Christianity—
  preparation for, 1.
  spread of, 79, 139, 157, 226, 260, 304, 396, 305.
  and Roman government, 79.
  declared illegal, 117.
  declared legal, 234.
  fall of Jewish, 102.
  and philosophy, 161, 196, 246, 277, 280.
  fall of predicted, 444.
Christians—
  and Jews, 79, 113.
  and Emperors, 115, 233.
  their worship, 116, 118, 163.
  and the Sabbath, 119.
  and governors, 133, 140.
  hatred of, 133.
  calumnies against, 140.
  helpful in calamity, 232, 269, 305.
Chrysanthius, 409.
Chrysaphius, 535.
Chrysostom, 484, 496.
Church—
  offices in, 105, 108, 110, 120.
  worship in, 116, 118.
  laxity in, 203, 226, 260, 308.
  and Montanism, 204, 208.
Church—
  unity of, 331.
  and Emperor, 340.
  of the Donatists, 345.
Churches, see *Buildings*.
Cicero, 13, 15, 17.
Circumcelliones, 341.
Classics, study of, 417, 455.
Claudius, 79.
Claudius, 234.
Clemens, Flavius, 103.
Clement of Alexandria, 69, 216, 261, 274.
Clement of Rome, 64, 78, 104, 350.
Clergy—
  privileges of, 333.
  celibacy of, 203, 381.
  translation of, 381.
Climate and religion, 4.
Cœlestine, 513.
Cœlestius, 565.
Commodus, 211.
Communion, 120.
Constans, 343, 404.
Constans II., 555.
Constantine—
  vision of, 314.
  statue of, 333.
  and the Church, 333, 372, 395.
  and Nicæan Creed, 384.
  public measures of, 395.
  conversion of, 400.
  baptism of, 401.
  death of, 401.
  and Christianity, 404.
Constantine II., 404.
Constantine Pogonatus, 556.
Constantinople, 398.
  Ecumenical Council of, 469, 506.
Constantius Chlorus, 235, 241, 310.
Constantius, 336, 404.
Controversies—
  Easter, 171.
  Donatist, 336.
  Arian, 348, 363.
  Origenistic, 476, 483, 500, 548.
  Pelagian, 561.
  Semi-Pelagian, 572.
Copts, 553.
Cornelius (Martyr Bishop), 231, 264.
Creed—
  Nicæan, 378, 383.
  Constantinopolitan, 469.
  of Chalcedon, 539.
Cresens, 169.
Crispus, 400.
Cross, the, 163.
Cunningham, 349, 367, 581.
Cucusus, 493.
Cynics, 169.
Cyprian, 254.

D

Damasus, 429.
Daphne, 423.
Deaconesses, 120.
Decius, 229.
De Corona, 212.
Demetrius, 286, 289.
Demiurgus, 97, 185.
Despair, religious, 16.
Dio Cassius, 152.
Diocletian, 235, 306, 328.
Dionysius, 231, 267.
Dioscurus, 535, 542.
Diospolis, Synod of, 566.
Divinity of Christ, 119.
Docetæ, 98, 128, 149.
Domitian, 102.
Domitilla, 103.
Domnus, 355.
Donaldson, 104, 110.
Donatists, 336.
Donatus (Bishop), 341.
Donatus (Convert), 256.
Donatus, of Casæ Nigræ, 338.
Dreams, 215.

E

Easter Observance, 150, 171.
Ebionitism, 95.
Eclecticism, 13, 224, 321, 326.
Ecstasy, 202.
Ecumenical, 372.
Edicts—
  of Diocletian, 238.
  of Constantine and Licinius, 318, 323, 325.
Ekebolus, 408.
Eleazar, 149.
Eleutherus, 192.
Epagathus, 153.
Ephesus, 515, 524.
Epicureanism, 12.
Epiphany, 180.
Epiphanius, 477, 486.
Episcopacy, 108, 128, 149, 210, 259, 265, 267.
Epistola Dogmatica, 539, 544.
Essenes, 26, 123.
Eucharist, 165.
Eucherius, 450.
Eudoxia, 485.
Eudoxius, 389.
Eugenius, 433.
Eunomius, 389.
Eusebius, 53, 70, 74, 85, 103, 121 137, 150, 172, 174, 177, 225, 231, 270, 308, 314, 325, 327, 331, 340, 353, 364, 374, 376, 396, 402.
Eusebius of Donylæum, 534.
Eusebius of Nicomedia, 376.
Eutropius, 497.
Eutyches, 533.

F

Fabianus, 230.
Fathers, apostolic, 104.
Felicissimus, 264.
Felicitas, 217.
Felix, 243.
Felix of Aptunga, 337.
Filioque, 472.
Firmilianus, 267.
Flavian, 537.
Florinus, 191.
Fortunatus, 264.
Fundanus, 133.
Future Life, 501.

G

Galerius, 235, 306, 318.
Gallienus, 234.
Galla, 433.
Gallus (Pro-consul), 84.
Gallus (Emperor), 231.
Germanicus, 143.
Geta, 221.
Gibbon on—
  Nero, 80.
  Trajan's Rescript, 117.
  the Jews, 134.
  Antoninus Pius, 136.
  Marcus Aurelius, 138.
  edict of Diocletian, 237.
  death of Diocletian, 329.
  Aurelian, 356.
  murder of Crispus, 400.
  Julian, 412, 421.
  Ambrose, 431.
  Alaric, 452.
Gieseler, 5.
Gnosis, Christian, 274.
Gnosticism, 92, 98, 179, 195.
Gnostics, 187.
God—
  and matter, 38, 97.
  of the Jews, 41, 180.
  incomprehensible, 179, 181.
Godet, 65.
Gordian, 225.
Granianus, 133.
Gratian, 429.
Greeks, 5, 53.
Gregory of Cappadocia, 387.
Gregory Nazianzen, 467, 506, 562.
Gregory Thaumaturgus, 292.
Guericke, 502, 567, 575.

H

Hadrian, 133.
Hagenbach, 14, 94, 206, 260, 361.
Hase, 5.

Hatch, 183, 367.
Hefele, 355, 514.
Hegesippus, 74, 103, 248.
Helena, 309, 333, 401.
Heliogabalus, 222.
Helios, 408.
Hellenism, 5, 455.
Henoticon, 544.
Heraklas, 289, 292.
Hergenröther, 401, 406.
Heraclius, 554.
Heretics—
  baptism by, 266.
  their clergy, 334.
Herod, 46.
Herod Antipas, 47.
Herod (Officer), 145.
Hexapla, 294.
Hierarchy, 209.
Hierocles, 236, 306.
Hilary, 394, 468.
Hillel, 25, 45.
Holy Spirit, 379, 466, 473.
Homilies, 166.
Homilies of Clement, 111.
Homoousios, 379.
Honorius, 443, 450.
Hosius, 372.
Hyginus, 181.
Hylic, 183.
Hypatia, 445.
Hypnopsychites, 362.

I

Ignatius, 123.
Images, 190, 191.
Immaculate Conception, 524.
Immortality, 9, 16, 160.
Individual and State, 11.
Innocent I., 568.
Irenæus, 56, 67, 70, 178, 183, 188.
Isis, 4.
Isochristoi, 548.

J

Jacobites, 553.
Jaldabaoth, 183.
James, 73.
Jerome, 56, 63, 70, 95, 247, 295, 442, 479, 481, 501, 566.
Jerusalem—
  siege of, 89.
  rebuilt, 135.
Jesus Christ—
  and the Pharisees, 25.
  and the Essenes, 31.
  in the synagogue, 44.
  and Herod Antipas, 47.
  and the Messianic hope, 51.
  date of birth of, 55.
  in Gnostic systems, 180.
  see *Person of Christ*.
Jesus, son of Ananus, 51.
Jesus of Jerusalem, 91.
Jews—
  of Palestine, 18.
  of Dispersion, 33.
  Political History of, 46.
  expelled from Rome, 79.
  Impenitence of, 92.
  Hadrian against, 134.
John, 65, 174.
  Gospel of, 69.
John (robber), 90.
John of Antioch, 517.
Josephus, 29, 50, 74, 84, 86, 113.
Jotapata, 87.
Jovian, 427.
Judaism, 17, 21, 40, 83, 128, 136.
Judas, 185.
Judas, the Galilean, 48.
Julian, 343, 390, 400, 407, 424.
  and Christianity, 414, 416.
  and Paganism, 419.
Juliana, 292.
Julius, 387.
Justin Martyr 158.
Justina (Martyr), 255.
Justina (Mother of Valentinian II.), 433, 462.
Justinian, 449, 547.

K

Kurtz, 288.

L

Labarum, 314.
Lactantius, 82, 241, 310, 315, 319,
Lampridius, 134, 223.
Lapsed, 155, 263.
Laurentius, 233.
Law, 22, 44.
Legates, Papal, 517, 539.
Legion, Thundering, 151.
Leo, Pope, 536.
Leonides, 214, 283.
Libanius, 408, 438.
Libellatici, 227, 263.
Licinius, 330.
Liddon, 515.
Logos—
  in Philo, 33, 93.
  in Gospel of John, 69.
  in Ebionitism, 96.
  in Cerinthus, 97.
  in Clement, 280.
  in Sabellius, 359.
  in Marcellus, 385.
Lucian, 126, 362.
Lucidus, 575.
Lucilla, 337.
Lucius, 167.
Lucius, 231.
Lyons, 153, 192.

M

Maccabees, 22, 46.
Macedonians, 466.
Macrianus, 232.
Macrinus, 222.
Magnentius, 405.
Majorinus, 338.
Makellum, 407.
Malchion, 354.
Mammæa, Julia, 289.
Mamre, 397.
Marcellina, 458.
Marcellinus, 344.
Marcellus of Ancyra, 385.
Marcellus (Bishop), 438.
Marcia, 211.
Marcian, 538.
Marcion, 185.
Marcosians, 190.
Marcus, 136.
Maris, 417.
Martin I., 555, 560.
Martyrs, Worship of, 147.
Mary of Jerusalem, 91.
Mary, the Virgin, 522.
Masada, 49.
Maturus, 155.
Maxentius, 313, 321.
Maximian, 235, 307, 329.
Maximilla, 201.
Maximin (Thracian), 224.
Maximin II., 321, 327.
Maximus, Galerius, 271.
Maximus (Emperor), 433.
Maximus of Ephesus, 409.
Maximus (Abbot), 555, 559.
Melchiades, 338.
Melchizedekians, 352.
Meletius, 370, 380.
Melito of Sardis, 158.
Memnon, 517.
Mensurius, 336.
Messianic hope, 48, 102.
Milan, Edict of, 323.
  Synod at, 388.
Milman, 3, 34, 358, 398, 451.
Miltiades, 158, 338.
Monarchians, 351.
Monica, 592.
Monophysitism, 542.
Monothelitism, 554,
Montanism, 193, 202, 351.

N

Naassenes, 183.
Natalis, 352.
Nature-worship, 3, 6.
Nazarenes, 95.
Neander, 6, 9, 15, 38, 117, 152, 156, 314, 377.
Neo-Platonism, 288, 306, 348, 408.
Nero, 79, 87.
Nerva, 103.
Nestorius, 510, 571.
Newman, 605.
Nice, Council of, 178, 372.
Nicetus, 145.
Nikokles, 408.
Noetus, 358.
Novatian, 264.
Novatus, 264.
Novitiate, Essenean, 28.

O

Oak, Synod of, 488.
Odoacer, 454.
Ophites, 183.
Orange, Council of, 575.
Ordinances, validity of, 346.
Orestes, 445.
Origen, 6, 96, 226, 282, 350, 361.
Orosius, 82.
Osiris, 4.

P

Pagan, 428.
Paganism, 2.
  decline of, 305, 320, 428, 444.
  suppression of, 449.
Pantænus, 277.
Papacy, 63, 108, 249, 341, 557, 605.
Paphnutius, 374.
Papinian, 217.
Paraclete, 200.
Parsism, 34.
Paschasinus, 539.
Paternus, Aspasius, 270.
Patricius, 593.
Patripassians, 356.
Paul, 2, 14, 24, 68, 75, 161.
Paul of Constantinople, 388.
Paul of Samosata, 353, 382.
Paulinus of Milan, 459.
Paulinus of Treves, 388.
Paulus (Gnostic), 285.
Pelagius, 568.
Pella, 85, 122.
Pepuzians, 200.
Perpetua, 217.
Persecution, 261, 344.
Person of Christ, 504, 510, 533, 542.
Peter, 57.
Peter (a Reader), 445.
Peter Fullo, 544.
Petilianus, 344.
Pharisees, 18.
Philip, 174.
Philip, son of Herod, 47.
Philip, Emperor, 225.
Philippopolis, 387.
Philo, 23, 30, 36.
Philosophy and Christianity, 161, 196, 246, 277, 280.

Pionius, 230.
Pistus, 386.
Plato, 9, 160.
Pliny, the elder, 16, 28.
Pliny, the younger, 115.
Plumptre, 12, 140.
Plutarch (Philosopher), 15.
Plutarch (Martyr), 286.
Pneumatic, 183, 204.
Pneumatomachi, 466.
Polybius, 6.
Polycarp, 67, 143, 185, 191.
Polycrates, 174.
Pompey, 76.
Pontilianus, 597.
Pontius, 270.
Poppæa, 81.
Porphyry, 288.
Potamiæna, 215.
Pothinus, 154.
Prædestinatus, 574.
Praxeas, 356.
Preaching, 300, 461.
Pre-existence, 500.
Presbyters, 130.
Priesthood, 110.
Primacy of Rome, 174, 268.
Priscilla, 201.
Priscillianists, 435.
Probus, 458.
Proclus, 512.
Proculus, 212.
Prophecy, 31, 48, 83, 162.
Proselytes, 41.
Prosper, 574.
Proterius, 543.
Ptolemæus, 167.
Publius, 136.
Pulcheria, 538.

Q

Quadratus, 158.
Quartodecimans, 172.
Quintus, 144.

R

Rabbis, 45.
Ramsay, 222.
Recognitions, 111.
Relics, 148, 156.
Resurrection, 20.
Rettberg, 255.
Reuss, 22, 27, 37.
Rites, heathen, 427, 437.
Robbers, Jewish, 85, 90.
Robber Synod, 535.
Romanian, 594.
Romans, 6.
Rome—
  Church of, 109, 174, 199.
  Peter at, 63.
  Paul at, 76.
Rome—
  capture of, 451.
Rufinus, 563.
Russell, 364, 378.
Rusticus, 169.

S

Sabellius, 358.
Sacraments, 131, 165, 251.
Saccas, Ammonius, 288.
Sacrifices, heathen, 397, 405, 419.
Sadducees, 18.
Salvator, 375.
Sanctus, 154.
Sardica, Council of, 387.
Saturninus, 185.
Satyrus, 461.
Scepticism, 4, 7, 13, 16, 140.
Schaff, 365, 374, 383, 400, 407, 411, 425, 436, 441, 521, 552, 571, 578.
Schlegel, 3.
School, Catechetical, 276.
Schools, Heathen, 444.
Schwegler, 348.
Scriptures—
  with heretics, 96, 188, 198, 209.
  in the Church, 100, 166, 242, 369.
  authority of, 250.
Secundus (Primate of Numidian Bishops), 337.
Secundus (of Ptolemais), 380.
Semi-Arians, 376, 389.
Seneca, 14, 17, 80.
Septuagint, 35, 168, 289, 294.
Serapis, temple of, 439.
Serenianus, 225.
Services, 44, 116, 163.
Sethites, 185.
Severus—
  Alexander, 223.
  Julius, 135.
  Septimius, 211.
Shammai, 25.
Simon (Essene), 48.
Simon (defender of Jerusalem), 90.
Sins, mortal, 204, 264.
Sirmium, Synod of, 390.
Sixtus, 233.
Sleepers, the Seven, 230.
Soæmias, Julia, 223.
Socrates, 8, 11.
Socrates (historian), 151, 379, 417, 445 491, 515.
Somatic, 183.
Song, 119.
Sozomen, 439, 491.
Stanley, 309, 381, 474.
Statues, on the, 497.
Stephanus, 266.
Stilicho, 450, 465.
Stoicism, 12, 360.
Strauss, 413.

Suetonius, 79.
Symeon, 121.
Symmachus, 429.
Synagogue, 19, 42.
Synesius, 502.
Synods, earliest, 207.

T

Tacitus, 46, 81, 84, 117.
Taskodrungites, 209.
Tatian, 141.
Telemachus, 450.
Temple, Jewish, 42, 90, 421.
Temples, heathen—
  destroyed, 332, 437, 443.
  closed, 405, 427.
Tertullian, 117, 167, 213, 215, 217, 221, 244, 349, 471, 562.
Tertullianists, 290.
Tetratheites, 548.
Thalcia, 371.
Themistius, 427.
Theodora, 547, 550.
Theodore, 423.
Theodore of Mopuestia, 507.
Theodore of Pharan, 554.
Theodoret, 370, 380.
Theodotus (Tanner), 352.
Theodotus (Money-changer), 352.
Theodosius, 432, 464.
Theodosius Askidas, 548.
Theodosius (Ostrogoth), 455.
Theodosius (Monophysite), 543.
Theognis, 380.
Theoktistus, 290.
Theon, 445.
Theonas, 380.
Theophilus of Alexandria, 439, 483.
Theotokos, 507, 511.
Theraputae, 39.
Thessalonica, Massacre at, 464.
Theudas, 49, 50.
Thomas Christians, 521.
Tiberius, 79.
Timothy Ælurus, 543.
Titus, 89.
Toledo, Council of, 472.
Toleration, 321, 326, 332.
Traditions, 101, 151, 174, 176, 196, 210, 248, 266, 280.
Traditores, 243, 339.
Trajan, 114, 124.
Transubstantiation, 131, 165.
Trinity, 349, 359, 500.
Triumph, the last, 450.
Tropici, 466.
Trullan Ecumenical Council, 555.
Trypho, 167.
Tychonicus, 347.
Type of the Faith, 555.
Tyre, Synod at, 384.

U

Ulphilas, 454.
Urbicus, 167.
Ursacius (Bishop), 389.
Ursacius (High-Priest of Galatia), 420.
Ursula, 224.

V

Valens, 389.
Valens (Emperor), 391.
Valentinian, 428.
Valentinian II., 430.
Valentinus, 181.
Valerian, 232.
Versions of Bible, 295.
Vespasian, 51, 82, 87, 89.
Victor, 171, 177.
Victor (legate), 375.
Vienne, persecution at, 153.
Vigilius, 551.
Vincentius, 375, 574.
Virgin, worship of, 509, 517, 522.
Vision of Constantine, 314.
Visions, 215.
Vulgate, 482.

W

Will, free, 561.
Wills, controversy of the, 554.
Wise men, the Seven, 449.

Z

Zabaism, 4.
Zadok, 19.
Zeno, 12.
Zeno, Emperor, 544.
Zenobia, 356.
Zosimus (historian), 400.
Zosimus (Bishop of Rome), 568.

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